QUR'ANIC SCIENCES AND SHI'I EXEGESIS

EDITED BY

ABBAS BAHMANPOUR

The current work provides a comprehensive vista on the sciences of the Qur'an as developed in the Shi'i context. It is a systematic presentation of Shi'i literature on various aspects of Qur'anic exegesis. Leading figures of Qur'anic scholarship in the Shi'i world have contributed to this volume, exploring a wide array of subjects such as revelation, methodology of exegesis, hermeneutics, reasons for revelation, definite and indefinite verses, improbability of distortion, and the thematic unity of different chapters of the Qur'an.

Also included in this volume are scholarly expositions on four classical Shi'i exegeses, namely *al-Tibyan*, *Majma' al-Bayan*, *Kanz al-'Irfan* and *Tafsir* of Mulla Sadra. Moreover, three modern masterpieces (*Al-Mizan*, *Nimunih*, and *Tasnim*) authored by twentieth-century Shi'i exegetes in Iran are examined.

Translation of the verse on the front cover: "...and it is the word of Allah alone which is supreme...." (9:40)

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وَ إِنَّ الْقُرْآنَ ظَاهِرُهُ أَنِيقٌ وَ بَاطِنُهُ عَمِيقٌ

And indeed, the outer aspect of the Qur'an is elegant, and its inner aspect is profound.

Imām ʿAlī (a)

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Preface

In the Name of God

Since its inception, the Islamic College has strived to contribute to the academic literature available on Islam, and up until now, it has translated both classical works and the writings of contemporary scholars. One of the main goals of the publication department of the College is to provide resources in the field of Islamic Studies that are easy to read and refer to, while upholding a strong academic standard. In order to fulfil this aim, many books have been published on topics such as law, principles of jurisprudence, hadith, Qur'anic sciences, philosophy, and Shi'ism. The current publication is, God willing, a continuation of this tradition.

Instead of having one author pen the entire work, several authors were asked to produce articles on various topics relating to Qur'anic sciences and Shi'i exegesis so that readers could benefit from a range of approaches and perspectives. Authors were chosen from among specialists based in Iran in order to allow readers to benefit from the writings of non-Western contemporary academics.

However, such a process was not devoid of its own difficulties. As the articles were written in Iran by scholars grounded in a different academic setting, it was a challenge to ensure that the work produced by them was suitably presented in the current book. This required very close co-ordination on the part of the organizers of this project. The authors were aware of the challenges that this undertaking presented and were kindly flexible enough to allow us to edit the articles as we saw fit. This provided us with the tract to mould the articles into a cohesive whole that would be pleasing and beneficial for our readers, and to give them a style that is familiar in Western academic writing.

Overall, the many hurdles that had to be crossed when producing this book highlighted the difficulties of *transferring knowledge*, as it were, from the traditional Islamic seminaries to Western academic circles. Unfortunately, the wealth of information available in the seminaries does not always translate well into Western academia, and although primary sources of Arabic and Persian are quite widely used in the West, there seems to be far less interest in more contemporary research, due to varying (and often understandable) reasons. Yet, without wishing to

enter into a wide and perhaps irrelevant debate here, it is not an unreasonable assertion that both Eastern and Western academic circles of Islamic studies can benefit from one another. It appears then that there should be an effective means of bridging the gap between these two nodes for the transfer of knowledge.

In this regard, I believe that the Islamic College plays an important role. There is a distinct need for Muslims to train Islamic scholars here in Europe. This need is not limited to academia, but it extends to other religious matters as well. It is vital that religious discourse on Islam, specifically among Muslims, takes place in a language that is comprehensible, acceptable, and attractive to the Western ear (language here naturally being used in a far more general sense than just its semantic one, encompassing also the mode and style of communicating ideas and concepts). The importance of this is stressed in the Qur'an:

وَ مَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِن رَّسُولٍ إِلاَّ بِلِسانِ قَوْمِهِ لِيُبَيِّنَ لَهُمْ

> And we did not send any messenger except with the tongue of its people, in order that he may clarify for them... (14:4)

As is often the case, it is not only a matter of *what* is being said, but rather *how* it is said, and the Qur'an is undoubtedly the best example of this. As the *ḥadīth* from Imām ʿAlī (a), quoted prior to this preface, indicates, the Qur'an's elegant language and style is far from being its only positive aspect; the Qur'an is also an endless ocean of knowledge. This is witnessed by the vast amount of literature produced for this book and the great minds that have dedicated their lives to studying it. Many a seeker has come to take their fill of its waters, and hopefully this book will be one cup that the student may imbibe.

***

We have tried as much as possible to clarify obscure passages by using clearer and simpler expressions, and by adding a few phrases here and there. Some articles required a degree of restructuring to ensure a more cohesive and flowing text. On occasion, we used footnotes where we felt a more detailed explanation was required, but we tried to avoid doing this as much as we could so as not to weigh down the text too much. In any case, an introductory work such as this cannot possibly cover all of the facets that a wide topic such as Qur'anic sciences or exegesis entails, and the reader is encouraged to pursue further interests, in other more detailed texts. The aim of this work is to simply familiarise newcomers to the topic with the basic concepts, ideas, and debates surrounding the issues covered therein, in order to equip them with the foundations for

further research. Hopefully this book has managed to strike a meaningful balance between detail and brevity, as well as depth and breadth. Certainly the work has benefitted from writers who have a strong background in the topics that they have written about, and in many cases, have been teaching or researching for years.

This book is divided into three sections: the first deals with topics which are related to Qur'anic sciences and features articles on topics that are generally featured in classical books of *'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*. The section starts with a rather detailed article from Fathollah Najjarzadegan, *The Qur'an and Distortion*, on the issues and concerns raised in regard to *taḥrīf*. The article addresses several historical matters and groups of traditions from both Shi'i and Sunni collections of *ḥadīth* that have on occasion been construed to indicate distortion, attempting to show that no such alteration can reasonably be said to have occurred. The topic is extremely pertinent as it has sparked continuous debate from the very early days of Islam right up to modern day academia. The article spends a good amount of time considering the classical arguments on *taḥrīf*, although more time could have been devoted to contemporary concerns about the distortion of the Qur'an.

Mohammad Kazem Shaker's article discusses the two fundamental concepts of *The 'Definite' and 'Indefinite' Verses of the Qur'an* (*muḥkam* and *mutashābih*), introducing these ideas and various relevant issues, as well as well-known early works written on the topic. The article should give the reader a working knowledge of these often used terms and an indication of the variety of opinions regarding them. These terms have immense bearings on *tafsīr*, as well as on the disciplines of Islamic law and theology.

This is followed by Mohammad Khamehgar's *The Reality of Qur'anic Revelation*, another classical topic of *'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*. In his article, Khamehgar walks the reader through the different matters related to the revelation of the Qur'an (*waḥy*), and gives us a glimpse of the myriad of theological discussions surrounding them; discussions that continue to this day and have direct a influence over how Muslims perceive their scripture.

Hasan Kharaqani's article touches on a topic that has sparked academic debate both historically and currently. *The Revelatory Nature of the Qur'anic Structure* considers arguments from both sides on whether or not the ordering of the Qur'anic chapters and verses was something revealed to Prophet Muḥammad (s) by God, or if it's current ordering was based on the independent reasoning of the Companions.

From time to time, this has sparked controversy along Shi'a-Sunni divides, with some polemicists claiming that the Companions tampered with the structure of the Qur'an in order to confuse people as to the true meaning of verses, which would have indicated the eminent status of the Ahl al-Bayt. Although some have argued for the *ijtihādī* nature of the ordering of chapters, fewer people have argued the same in the case of the verses.

The next article continues with the subject of the Qur'anic structure. In *Thematic Unity of the Qur'anic Sūrahs*, Khamehgar deliberates on the themes of the Qur'anic chapters and asks if each chapter truly has its own central and unifying theme. The concept is a relatively new one and there is little agreement on it, which Khamehgar duly points out. However, it is an interesting proposition and certainly a literary aspect of the Qur'an that deserves investigation.

Reasons of Revelation and Qur'anic Exegesis is Abbas Salehi's entry on the traditional subject of *asbāb al-nuzūl*, which deals with the topic of when, why, and how verses were revealed. A number of books have been authored by Shi'i scholars throughout history that sought to compile such narrations; however, the author prudently points out that one must not blindly rely on such narrations, because in fact the topic has been subject to a lot of distortion. Even though the narrations of *asbāb al-nuzūl* are highly valuable and indeed sometimes critical in gaining a correct understanding of verses, there is a serious need to remain critical towards these narrations. Just as *asbāb al-nuzūl* was significant for students and researchers of classical Qur'anic studies, the topic is still relevant today as it is directly connected to much of the current discussions on hermeneutics.

The final article in the section of Qur'anic Sciences, written by Ali Nasiri, examines *The Reciprocal Relationship Between the Qur'an and Sunna* of the Prophet (s). By now the reader should have a good idea about the nature of Qur'anic revelation, and thus his attention is turned to how it relates to the words and deeds of the Prophet (s). Together, the Qur'an and the Sunna are considered the primary sources of Islamic knowledge and it is important to comprehend the interplay between the two.

The second section, dealing with Shi'i Exegesis, has three articles devoted to exegesis in general. Mohammad F. Maybodi begins the section with his discussion on the *Principles of Qur'anic Exegesis* and gives us a well-written expose on the topic. The article is a great starting point for this section, equipping the readers with the necessary familiarity of

topics and concepts that will help a person work one's way through sections two and three. The article is also a good reference for some of the technical jargon that is used by exegetes.

Mohammad Hasan Javaheri broaches the topic of the *Translation of the Qur'an*, which itself is a form of *tafsīr*. The art of translating the Qur'an has a long and rich history as Islam quite quickly came into contact with non-Arabic speaking people. For English readers who rely on translations, the article should be of particular interest. The author also gives useful guidelines on how to undertake Qur'anic translations.

This is followed by an article that deals with an even earlier concept in *tafsīr*, namely *ta'wīl*. Here, Mohammad Kazem Shaker deals with this key concept and introduces the various meanings that the term has been given over the course of history by different scholars. Although in early times *ta'wīl* was practically synonymous with *Tafsīr*, it later gained a more technical and specific meaning, even though what that specific meaning is, is not a matter of consensus.

The next article written by Mohammad Ali Reza'i, despite its title *Methodologies of Shi'i Exegetes*, is generally applicable, and it is important to read it in conjunction with his other article *Shi'i Exegetical Approaches* as the two concepts are often confused with one another. These two articles are essential reading as they facilitate one's understanding of the contents of section three, which often discuss an approach or methodology adopted by an exegete.

The final article in this section by Alijan Karimi, *The Historical Development of Shi'i Commentaries*, is essentially a summary of Muḥammad 'Alī Ayāzī's book, *Sayr-i Taṭawwur-i Tafāsīr-i Shī'a*. It is also useful to read this before reading the individual introductions to exegetical works in section three as it provides the reader with a useful framework and the necessary background knowledge to contextualize these works.

The article however, touches on an under-researched field in English language academia. Even though one may argue that Shi'ism (especially Twelver Shi'ism) until the 1980's was under-represented in academic research, and despite the recent surge in interest – that no doubt is connected to the significance of the Shi'i presence in the political arena of the Middle-East[1] – there is still much that requires scholarly attention. My own interest in the field of Shi'i Qur'anic studies has highlighted to

[1] See Rainer Brunner and Werner Ende, *The Twelver Shia in Modern Times*, Leiden: Brill, 2000, pp. ix-xii.

me this need further, and the scarcity of critical research available in the English language is an inescapable reality; although, admittedly, Meir Bar-Asher has done some interesting research on the more well-known *tafsīr* works of early Shi'i scholars, such as the four 4th/10th century tafsīr works mentioned in Karīmī's article, namely *Tafsīr Furāt al-Kūfī*, *Tafsīr al-Qummī*, *Tafsīr al-'Ayyāshī*, and *Tafsīr al-Nu'mānī*,[2] as well as a separate work on the *tafsīr* attributed to Imām al-'Askarī (a).[3] The recent publication by the Encyclopaedia of the World of Islam Press, entitled *Qur'anic Exegeses*, also deals with this topic.[4]

However, I find myself compelled to point out that it is not implausible to speak about Shi'i exegesis as having started earlier than the 4th century,[5] and although Karimi makes brief mention about the Qur'an compiled by Imām 'Alī (a) as the earliest Shi'i exegetical source and names a few of the exegetes from among the companions of the fifth and sixth Imams, there seems to be a lot of room for more to be said on this topic.

Moving on to section three, the reader is introduced to some of the most significant works of Shi'i exegesis. The reader may be disappointed to find some very important *tafsīr* works have no article dedicated to them here; however, it was not feasible to discuss every single significant Shi'i exegetical work.

The articles in section three have been arranged according to the chronological progression of the *tafsīr* works. The section starts with Morteza Karimi-Nia's useful introduction to the canonical work of Shi'i exegesis, namely *al-Tibyān* of Shaykh al-Ṭūsī. The importance of both the man and his *tafsīr* to Shi'i scholarship cannot be understated and Karīmīniya does a splendid job of acquainting us with both.

Muḥammad Bahramī then familiarizes us with a *tafsīr* work that drew highly on *al-Tibyān*. *Majma' al-Bayān* by the 6th/12th century scholar

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[2] Meir Bar-Asher, *The Historical Development of Shi'a Commentaries*, Jerusalem: Brill, 1999. C.f. Idem, *Scripture and Exegesis in Early Imāmi Shi'ism*, Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1999.

[3] Meir Bar-Asher, 'The Qur'an Commentary Ascribed to Imām Ḥasan al-'Askarī,' in *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* (2000), pp. 358-379.

[4] Gholamali Haddad 'Ādel, Mohammad Ja'far Elmi, Hassan Taromi-Rad (eds.), *Qur'anic Exegeses*, London: EWI Press, 2012.

[5] Naturally, there is no consensus among contemporary Western academia about what may be deemed the starting point of Shī'ism; however, since that is not our specific concern here, we may presume the authenticity of the traditional Shi'a account of its own history.

'Allāmah al-Ṭabrisī was so well-written that it outshone the earlier work of Ṭūsī, and is still an extremely popular work of exegesis even today.

After those two comprehensive exegetical works, Bahramī then presents us the far more specialized work of Fāḍil Miqdād (d. 9th/15th century), *Kanz al-'Irfān*. This work focuses on the *āyāt al-aḥkām*, or legal verses in the Qur'an, and is a typical example of many other such works penned by scholars on the topic. In contrast to this Ali Nasiri, introduces us to the *tafsīr* of Mullā Ṣadrā, a unique work that delves deeply into philosophical and mystical matters, for which Mullā Ṣadrā is well known.

Jumping a few centuries ahead again we come to contemporary Shi'i exegesis, beginning with an article by Musa Sadr on the very famous *Tafsīr al-Mizān* by the late 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī. This work sent waves across the Shi'i exegetical world and was hailed as its ultimate peak. Anyone interested in Shi'i exegesis would do well to familiarize themselves with this book.

Mohammad Hasan Derayati then gives us an overview of *Tafsīr-i Nimūnih*, a group project overseen by the contemporary scholar Ayatollah Nāṣir Makārim-Shīrāzī with the intention of producing a highly accessible, yet comprehensive, work of exegesis for both specialists and non-specialists. Without a doubt, the popularity of this work speaks for the success of this project.

Finally, *A Glance at Tasnīm* by Ali Modabber Islami introduces us to an as of yet unfinished work of exegesis. Ayatollah Jawādī Āmulī's mammoth work of exegesis is already sparking large interest, despite it being a work in progress. Hopefully this article will provide the reader with a good overview of Shi'i exegesis, and the various types of exegetical works and styles that it has historically produced and is still producing today.

It is the sincere hope of this editor that the reader will benefit from the material in this book and gain a better understanding of the highly important sciences of the Qur'an and *tafsīr*. Hopefully this book will help upkeep and generate more of an interest that we have seen in Shi'i exegesis and will aid future and present scholars in their research and their quest for knowledge.

To all of those who have been of assistance in the production of this book, we offer our warmest thanks. Certainly with God lies true knowledge, and towards Him is our destination.

Abbas Bahmanpour
July 2017

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Musa Sadr is a senior lecturer in Mashhad seminary and the editor-in-chief of *Pazhūhesh-hā-yi Qur'ānī* (Qur'anic Research) journal. He has published over 80 articles on the sciences of the Qur'an.

SECTION 1

QUR'ANIC SCIENCES

THE QUR'AN AND DISTORTION

Fathollah Najjarzadegan
Translated by Mohammad Ehsan Rangiha & Abbas Bahmanpour

One of the earliest ongoing debates among Muslims has been the textual integrity of the Qur'an. Muslim polemicists have accused each other of believing in corruption and alteration of the text, and outside observers have called into question the reliability with which the Qur'anic text may be traced back to the Prophet (s). This article examines the narrations that cast doubt, or have been used to cast doubt, on the completeness and authenticity of the Qur'anic text, and attempts to show that such narrations are themselves dubious in their authenticity and incomplete in their purport.

Taḥrīf comes from the Arabic root *ḥ-r-f*[1] which means 'to distort' or 'to misrepresent';[2] thus, distortion of speech means to interpret the meaning of what the speaker actually intends to say to what the speaker could possibly have meant,[3] resulting in an alteration in the intended meaning of the speaker.

The concept of distortion has been mentioned in the Qur'an (e.g. 5:13, 5:41) and in traditions with the same meaning as above.[4]

Distortion can be divided into two types: semantic and linguistic. Interpreting a verse of the Qur'an in a way other than how it is intended to be interpreted is a form of semantic distortion. This type of distortion has happened in both early and modern times, and in fact traditions narrated from Imām ʿAlī (a) indicate that not only did it occur in his time

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[1] Ibn Fāris, *Muʿjam Maqāyyis al-Lughah*, ed. M. Harun, Qum: Daftar-i Tablīghāt, 1404/1983, vol. 2, p. 42; al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt fī Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, ed. S. Dawudi, Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 1412/1991, p. 228, s.v. *ḥ-r-f*.

[2] Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyyis al-Lughah*, vol. 2, p. 43; Muḥammad ibn Manzūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab*, ed. 'A. Shiri, Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 1408/1987, vol. 3, pp. 128-129, s.v. *h-r-f*.

[3] al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*, p. 228.

[4] Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Raḍī (compiler), *Nahj al-Balāghah*, ed. Subḥī Ṣāliḥ, Tehran: Dār al-Uswah, 1415/1994, sermons 17 and 147.

but that it would continue to do so in the future.[5] The Qur'an has mentioned the occurrence of this type of distortion in the previous scriptures (e.g. 2:75, 4:46). Qur'anic commentary based on one's personal opinion (*al-tafsīr bil-ra'y*), which is condemned in *ḥadīth*, can result in this type of distortion, and some commentators have intentionally or unintentionally fallen into this trap.[6]

Linguistic distortion, on the other hand, can take several forms. Given the nature of the Arabic script, which at the time of recording the Qur'anic text used the same consonantal outline for several letters and lacked diacritical marks, there evolved different recitations of the Qur'anic text.

Although the text itself was agreed upon, the pronunciation was in question. However, these changes have not found their way into the recitation that is prevalent today.[7]

In contrast, throughout history, some have alleged that the actual words of the Qur'anic script were changed. However, the vast majority of scholars and Qur'anic commentators from all schools of thought have dismissed this idea. It is commonly held between both Shi'i and Sunni scholars that the Qur'anic script today is the same as it was in the early Islamic period;[8] in fact, the main reason for collecting all of the Qur'anic manuscripts during the time of 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān was to protect the Qur'an from this type of distortion.

Virtually no scholar has ever claimed that any verses or letters were actually added to the Qur'an, and, in fact, rejecting this type of distortion is a cardinal Islamic belief, as the Holy Qur'an itself mentions that it is protected from these sorts of additions (2:24). Given the unique style of the Qur'anic text, were someone to attempt to add any verses, it would be almost immediately obvious. Similarly, there is general consensus that the aforementioned verse also indicates that the Qur'anic text is

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[5] Raḍī (compiler), *Nahj al-Balāghah*, sermon 17; Muḥammad ibn Ya'qūb al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, Tehran: Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmiyyah, 1375 AH (Solar)/1996, vol. 8, p. 387.

[6] 'Abd Allāh Jawādī Āmulī, *Nizāhat-i Qur'ān az Taḥrīf*, Qum: Isrā', 1383 AH (Solar)/2004, pp. 18-19.

[7] Abū al-Qāsim al-Khu'ī, *al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, n.p.: Anwar al-Huda: 1401/1980, pp. 198-197.

[8] Ibn Abī Dāwūd al-Sijistānī, *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif*, ed. A. Wa'īz, n.p.: Dār al-Bashā'ir, 1423/2002, vol. 1, pp. 253-292.

protected from being lost, and so none of the verses are thought to have been removed from the original script.[9]

Finally, al-Khu'ī discusses one more issue concerning distortion: the debate on whether or not the *basmalah* (the formula-prayer: *bismillāh al-raḥmān al-raḥīm*) and the *mu'awwidhatayn* (the two chapters of al-Falaq and al-Nās) are actually a part of the Qur'an or were they merely included in the script of the codex.[10] Nonetheless, in reality, this does not fall under the category of distortion.

With his usual foresight, the Holy Prophet (s) ensured that the memorization, writing, and distribution of the Qur'an were public affairs in order to ensure its preservation. Setting aside the minor differences in recitation, it can be said with great confidence that the Qur'an we have today is the same Qur'an that was revealed to the Prophet (s) without any verse or verses added or removed. However, there are some traditions that challenge this opinion. We will analyse these traditions, which exist in both Shi'i and Sunni sources.

TRADITIONS ALLUDING TO THE DISTORTION OF THE QUR'AN IN SUNNI WORKS

One of the oldest Sunni books that includes narrations challenging the integrity of the Qur'an is the *Muwaṭṭa'* compiled by Mālik ibn Anas. In this book, he narrates the following from 'A'ishāh:

> It had been a part of what was revealed inthe Qur'an that ten known sucklings make a person *maḥram* [i.e. someone whom one is never permitted to marry on account of being related to them in a particular way]. This was then abrogated to five known sucklings, and the Prophet (s) passed away while this was part of what was recited of the Qur'an.[11]

Mālik ibn Anas also narrates that because verses at the beginning of *Sūrat al-Barā'ah* were removed, the *basmalah* was also removed, and that *Sūrat al-Barā'ah* had once been the length of *Sūrat al-Baqarah*.[12] A number of other traditions found in the six canonical Sunni books (*al-ṣiḥāḥ al-sittah*), other Sunni collections of *ḥadīth* (including, but not

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[9] al-Khu'ī, *al-Bayān*, p. 199; Jawādī Āmulī, *Nazāhat-i Qur'ān*, pp. 17-21.

[10] 'Abd Allāh ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī Shaybah, *al-Muṣānnaf*, ed. S. Muḥammad, Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1409/1988, vol. 7, p. 194; al-Khu'ī, *al-Bayān*, pp. 199-200; Ghāzī, 'Ināyah, *Shubuhāt ḥawl al-Qur'ān wa Tafnīduhā*, Beirut: Maktab al-Hilāl, 1996, p. 41.

[11] Mālik ibn Anas, *al-Muwaṭṭa'*, n.d., vol. 2, p. 608.

[12] Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1407/1986, vol. 1, p. 142.

limited to, the *sunan* collections), and other sources, appear to support the idea of the distortion of the Qur'an.[13] After the 3rd/9th century, al-Nasā'ī (d. 305/917),[14] Ṭabarī (d. 310/992),[15] Ṭabarānī (d. 360/970),[16] and al-Ḥākim al-Nayshābūrī (d. 405/1014) collected some of these traditions in their books.[17]

It was not until the 3rd century that a serious critical review of these narrations was made. It appears that Qāsim ibn Sallām (d. 222/836) took the first steps in this regard in his *Kitāb Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān*. After mentioning some of these traditions, he writes:

> These issues [which talk about omissions in the Qur'an], like the mentioning of 'the afternoon prayer' in[the verse] "Be guardians of your prayers, and of the midmost prayer, the afternoon prayer" (2:238), are used as commentary of the Qur'an...[18]

Abū Ja'far al-Naḥḥās (d. 338/949) refers to another book of Sallām's – *al-Nāsikh wa al-Mansūkh* – in which the latter maintains that some verses were revealed and then recited only for a limited time. He says that while the recitation of these verses was then abrogated (*naskh al-tilāwah*), the religious rulings taken from any such verses remained in effect.[19] Historically, the theory of 'the abrogation of recitation but not the ruling' (*naskh* p. 100; Muḥammad ibn Isḥāq ibn Khuzaymah, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, ed. M. Muṣṭafā, n.p.: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1412/1991, vol. 1, p. 280; Abū Dāwūd al-Ṭayālisī, *Musnad*, Beirut: Dār al-Ḥadīth, n.d., p. 12; Ibn Abī Shaybah, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 8, p. 570; Abū Bakr al-Bayhaqī, *al-Sunan al-Kubrā*, Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1416/1995, vol. 8, p. 211; 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣan'ānī, *al-Muṣannaf*, ed. H. al-Raḥmān, n.p.: al-Majlis al-'Ilmi, n.d., vol. 2, p. 365. *al-*

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[13] Muḥammad al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1401/1980, vol. 8, p. 25; Muslim ibn Ḥajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, ed. M. Salīm, Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Ilmiyyah, 1415/1994, vol. 3.

[14] Aḥmad ibn Shu'ayb al-Nasā'ī, *Sunan*, Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1418/1997, vol. 4, p. 271.

[15] Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān*, ed. S. Jamīl, Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1415/1994, vol. 9, p. 18, vol. 17, p. 131, vol. 18, p. 87.

[16] Sulaymān ibn Aḥmad al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr*, ed. H. al-Salafī, n.p.: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1405/1984, vol. 1, p. 293.

[17] al-Ḥākim al-Nayshābūrī, *al-Mustadrak 'alā al-Ṣaḥīḥayn*, ed. M. 'Abd al-Qādir, Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Ilmiyyah, 1411/1990, vol. 2, pp. 415, 531.

[18] Qāsim ibn Sallām, *Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān*, ed. M. al-'Aṭiyyah, Damascus: Dār ibn Kathīr, n.d., p. 195. Qur'anic translations are from M. M. Pickthall.

[19] Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Naḥḥās, *al-Nāsikh wa al-Mansūkh*, ed. S. Ibrāhīm, Beirut: al-Risalāh, vol. 1, pp. 434–436.

tilāwah dūn al-ḥukm) has been cited by Sunni scholars to justify the traditions that apparently imply the distortion of the Qur'an. However, in this case, Naḥḥās rejects this theory and suggests another way of explaining these traditions.[20]

Other books defend the essential integrity of the Qur'anic text. For instance, in *Ta'wīl Mushkil al-Qur'ān,* Ibn Qutaybah (d. 276/889) justifies the presence of traditions that allude to mistakes or distortion in the Qur'anic text.[21] He also addresses the discrepancies between the Qur'anic recitations of Ibn Mas'ūd and Ubay ibn Ka'b.[22] Ṭabarī's 4th/10th century efforts in this field are also outstanding.[23] These efforts of Sunni scholars to prove the complete preservation of the Qur'an, and its protection from distortion, started in the 3rd century and still continue to this day.

Unfortunately, some later writers have hastily accused scholars who have simply mentioned in their collections traditions which apparently indicate *taḥrīf* to actually subscribe to the view that the Qur'an has been distorted.[24] However, it seems that a more moderate approach is called for here. This does not mean that there had never been any scholars who understood these narrations literally. A good case in point would be Ibn Shanabudh al-Baghdādī (d. 328/939) – one of the fourteen famous reciters of the Qur'an[25] – who used to read the Qur'an in an anomalous (*shādh*) recitation. He was of the opinion that 'Uthmān failed in compiling all of the Qur'an, and that 500 *aḥruf* ('letters') were missing from the present copy of the Qur'an. Furthermore, he claimed that the Companions had also added some material to the present Qur'an.[26] Later, we find that 'Abd

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[20] Ibid., p. 438.

[21] Ibid., p. 50; 'Abd Allāh ibn Muslim Ibn Qutaybah, *Ta'wīl Mushkil al-Qur'ān,* ed. S. A. Saqr, Cairo: Dār al-Turāth, 1393/1973, p. 23.

[22] Ibid., pp. 43, 47.

[23] Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān,* vol. 9, pp. 18-19.

[24] Nāṣir al-Ghaffārī, *Uṣūl Madhhab al-Shī'a,* n.p.: Dār al-Riḍā, 1418/1997, vol. 1, pp. 226 – 228; Muḥammad Māl Allāh, *al-Shī'a wa Taḥrīf al-Qur'ān,* ed. M. A. al-Najafī, n.p.: 1409/1988, p. 57; Iḥsān Ilāhī-Ẓāhir, *al-Shī'a wa'l-Qur'ān,* Lahore: Idarah Tarjumān al-Sunna, 1403/1982, pp. 24-25.

[25] Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Bannā, *Itḥāf Fuḍalā' al-Bashar,* ed. S. Muḥammad, Beirut: 'Alam al-Kutūb, 1407/1986, vol. 1, pp. 75–77.

[26] Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmi' li-Aḥkām al-Qur'ān,* Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1405/1984, vol. 1, p. 81; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh al-Baghdād,* ed. A. Aṭa', Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1417/1996, vol. 1, p. 296, Abū Shāmah 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ismā'īl, *al-Murshid al-Wajīz,* ed. T. Altıkulaç, Beirut: Dār Sadir, 1395/1975, p. 187.

al-Wahhāb al-Sha'rānī (d. 973/1565) also claimed that were it not for his fear of introducing doubt into the peoples' minds, he would have recited to them everything that had been omitted from the 'Uthmānic codex.[27] Similar ideas have been expressed in the contemporary work *al-Furqān* by Muḥammad al-Khaṭīb.

Nonetheless, the vast majority of Sunni scholars are of the view that the Qur'an has not been distorted. Among them the following individuals can be mentioned:

Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Tha'labī (d. 437/1045);[28] Ibn Ḥazm al-Andalūsī (d. 456/1063);[29] 'Alī ibn Aḥmad al-Waḥīdī (d. 467/1074);[30] Ḥusayn ibn Mas'ūd al-Baghawī (d. 516/1122);[31] Jār Allāh Maḥmūd al-Zamakhsharī (d. 528/1133);[32] Qāḍī 'Iyād ibn Mūsā (d. 544/1149);[33] 'Abd al-Ḥaqq ibn 'Aṭiyyah al-Andalūsī (d. 546/1151);[34] Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209);[35] Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Qurṭubī (d. 671/1272);[36] 'Abd Allāh ibn Aḥmad al-Nasafī (d. 710/1310);[37] Ismā'īl ibn Kathīr al-Dimashqī (d. 774/1369);[38] 'Abd Allāh al-Bayḍāwī (d. 791/1388);[39] Muḥammad ibn al-

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[27] 'Alī ibn Ibrāhīm al-Qummī, *Tafsīr*, Qum: Dār al-Kitāb, 1404/1983, vol. 1, p. 22.
[28] Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Tha'labī, *al-Kashf wa'l-Bayān*, Beirut: Dār al-Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1422/2001, vol. 5, p. 331.
[29] Ibn Ḥazm al-Andalūsī, *al-Fiṣāl fī al-Milal*, Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifah, 1406/1985, vol. 4, p. 182.
[30] 'Alī ibn Aḥmad al-Waḥīdī, *al-Wasīṭ fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Majīd*, ed. A. Aḥmad, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1415/1994, vol. 3, p. 40.
[31] Ḥusayn ibn Mas'ūd al-Baghawī, *Ma'ālim al-Tanzīl*, Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1414/1993, vol. 3, p. 44., Ḥusayn ibn Mas'ūd al-Baghawī, *Ma'ālim al-Tanzīl*, Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1414/1993, vol. 3, p. 44.
[32] Jār Allāh al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, Qum: Balāghah, 1415/1994, vol. 2, p. 572.
[33] Qāḍī 'Iyād ibn Mūsā, *al-Shifā' bi-Ta'rīf Ḥuqūq al-Muṣṭafā*, Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1409/1988, vol. 2, p. 304-305.
[34] Ibn 'Aṭiyyah al-Andalūsī, *al-Muḥrar al-Wajīz*, n.p.: al-Majlis al-'Ilmi 1411/1990, vol. 10, p. 112.
[35] Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-Kabīr*, Qum: Daftar-i Tablīghāt, 1413/1992, vol. 1, p. 160.
[36] Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmi' li-Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, vol. 10, p. 5
[37] 'Abd Allāh ibn Aḥmad al-Nasafī, *Madārik al-Tanzīl*, n.p.: Dār al-Fikr, n.d., vol. 2, p. 269.
[38] Ismā'īl ibn 'Umar ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Azīm*, Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifah, 1409/1988, vol. 2, p. 567.
[39] 'Abd Allāh al-Bayḍāwī, *Anwār al-Tanzīl*, Beirut: A'lāmi, 1410/1989, vol. 3, p. 362.

Jazarī (d. 833/1429);[40] Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505);[41] Muḥammad al-Shawkānī (d. 1250/1834);[42] Maḥmūd al-Ālūsī (d. 1270/1853);[43] Sayyid Quṭb (1386/1966);[44] and many others.

The traditions found in Sunni sources that could be construed as indicative of *taḥrīf* can be divided into five different categories:

1. The presence of mistakes in the Qur'an

The presence of mistakes in the Qur'an may also be considered to be a matter that is connected to the concept of *taḥrīf* of the revealed words. In this section, we will relate a few traditions from the Sunni school of thought which mention this.

> Ibn 'Urwah narrates from his father:
>
> I asked 'A'ishāh about the mistake in the verse '*in hādhāni la-sāhirāni*' (20:63), which, according to the recitation of Ibn Kathīr, was read as *inna* instead of *in*; and I also asked about the mistake in '*wa al-muqīmīna al-ṣalāta wa al-mu'tūna al-zakāta*' (4:162), and '*inna alladhīna āmanū wa alladhīna hādū wa al-sābi'ūna*' (5:69). She replied, "This is the doing of those who recorded the revelation and have erred in writing it" [i.e. instead of '*hādhāni*', '*muqīmīna*', and '*al- sābi'ūna*', the words should have been – according to this narration – '*hādhaynī*', '*muqīmuna*', and '*al-sābi'īna*' respectively].[45]

It has also been narrated that the third caliph 'Uthmān commented after seeing the Qur'an: 'I see something of a mistake in it [its script], but the Arabs will amend it with their language.'[46]

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[40] Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Jazarī, *al-Nashr fī al-Qirā'at al-'Āshr*, ed. Z. 'Umayrat, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1418/1997, vol. 1, pp. 12-14.

[41] Jalāl al-Dīn al-Maḥallī and Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*, Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifah, n.d., p. 265.

[42] Muḥammad al-Shawkānī, *Fatḥ al-Qādir*, Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifah, n.d., vol. 3, p. 122.

[43] Maḥmūd al-Ālūsī, *Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī*, ed. M. Ḥusayn, Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1417/1996, vol. 1, p. 45.

[44] Sayyid Quṭb, *Fī Ẓilāl al-Qur'ān*, Cairo: Dār al-Shuruq, 1400/1979, vol. 4, p. 2127 – 2129.

[45] Ibn Sallām, *Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān*, pp. 161- 162; Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān*, vol. 6, p. 34; al-Suyūṭī has also narrated some other traditions which talk about mistakes in some words of the Qur'an ; see *al-Itqān*, vol. 1, pp. 165- 169.

[46] Ibn Shabbāḥ al-Numayrī, *Tārīkh al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah* (Qum: Dār al-Fikr, 1410AH), vol. 3, p. 1013; al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *Muḥāḍarāt al-Udabā'*, ed. U. al-Tabba' (Beirut: Dār al-Qalam, 1420 AH), vol. 2, p. 449.

Some Sunni scholars mention that the reason for these mistakes was because the writers did not have sufficient expertise in writing Arabic.[47] However, the majority of scholars have classified these narrations as isolated reports (*khabar wāḥid*) with unreliable content (*gharīb*). The cases that apparently seem like mistakes are in fact considered by them to be a part of the unique script of the Qur'an that is based on a hidden wisdom, and they refer to considerable evidence from the Arabic language to support this position.[48] Fakhr al-Rāzī says: 'The present Qur'anic text (*muṣḥaf*) has been narrated from the Holy Prophet (s) through multiple attestation (*tawātur*); so how can there be any mistake in it?'[49] Commentators have also explained how to make sense of the three verses mentioned above in their 'mistaken' wordings.[50]

2. Change in some words of the Qur'an

Ibn Abī Dāwūd al-Sijistānī narrates from ʿAbbād ibn Suhayb that Ḥajjāj changed eleven letters in some words of the Qur'an.[51]

In addition to the fact that most of these asserted changes were only related to the recitation (*qirā'ah*),[52] this type of alteration has no basis. Firstly, Ibn Abī Dāwūd narrates the aforementioned report from ʿAbbād ibn Suhayb al-Baṣrī (d. 212/827), who in turn narrates it on the authority of ʿAwf ibn Abī Jamīlah (d. 146/763). However, ʿAbbād cannot be considered the narrator of ʿAwf (due to their age difference). Scholars of *rijāl* (the biographical study of *ḥadīth* narrators) also do not consider ʿAbbād to be one of the narrators of ʿAwf.[53] They do not regard him as being a reliable narrator and hold the view that the traditions he has narrated should be set aside (*matrūk*).[54] Secondly, in the era of Ḥajjāj,

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[47] Iṣfahānī, *Muḥāḍarāt al-Udabā'*, vol. 2, p. 449.

[48] Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-Bayān*, vol. 6, p. 36; ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-ʿAzīm*, vol. 1, p. 298; and vol. 3, p. 165; al-Ālūsī, *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī*, vol. 6, pp. 293- 294.

[49] Fakhr al-Rāzī, *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr*, vol. 11, p. 106.

[50] See for example Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, vol. 1, pp. 590, 660; and vol. 3, p. 72; al-Ālūsī, *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī*, vol. 1, pp. 54-55.

[51] Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif*, p. 280; Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī, *Nukāt al-Intiṣār li Naql al-Qur'ān*, ed. M. Zaghlūl, n.p.: Mansha'ah al-Maʿārif, 1971, p. 399.

[52] ʿUmar ibn Ibrāhīm Riḍwān, *Āra' al-Mustashriqīn*, Riyāḍ: Dār al-Tiba'h, 1413/1992, vol. 1, pp. 430-431.

[53] Jamāl al-Dīn al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl*, ed. Bashshar ʿIwad, Beirut: al-Risalāh, 1415/1994, vol. 22, pp. 438-439.

[54] Ibn Abī Ḥātam al-Rāzī, *al-Jarḥ wa al-Taʿdīl*, Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1372/1909, vol. 6, p. 81-82; ibn Ḥajar al-ʿĀsqalānī, *Lisān al-Mizān*, Beirut: al-ʿAlamī, 1390/1970,

any such tampering would have been impossible due to the widespread existence of Qur'anic reciters (*qurrā'*) and memorizers (*ḥuffāẓ*); therefore, implementing even minor changes to all of the various and widespread copies of the Qur'an would have been a momentous, if not impossible, task.[55]

Thus, even if we wished to assume that the tradition is reliable, we may speculate that these changes were only made to Ḥajjāj's personal copy of the Qur'an, as corrections to mistakes he might have found therein and amended based on other available copies of the Qur'an were free of such errors. It was then simply a matter of malicious, or well-meaning but uninformed, individuals to claim that such corrections were made to all copies of the Qur'an.[56]

3. Some verses being forgotten

This type of tradition is more prolific in Sunni sources. Let us examine a few examples.

It has been narrated from 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb that the Qur'an had 1,027,000 letters,[57] which if true, would mean that more than two-thirds of the Qur'an has been lost.[58]

Qāsim ibn Sallām narrates from 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Umar: 'None of you can claim that he has a complete copy of the Qur'an ... most of the Qur'an has been lost.'[59]

Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī talks about a chapter similar to *Sūrat al-Tawbah*, of which all of the verses apart from one had been forgotten, and another chapter similar to one of the *musabbiḥāt*, all of which apart from one verse had also been forgotten.[60]

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vol. 3, p. 230; Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām*, ed. 'U. 'Abd al-Salām, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Arabī, 1410/1989, vol. 15, pp. 198-199.

[55] al-Khu'ī, *al-Bayān*, p. 219.

[56] Murtaḍā al-'Askarī, *al-Qur'ān al-Karīm wa Riwāyat al-Madrasatayn*, Beirut: Sharikat al-Tawhīd, 1417/1996, vol. 2, pp. 693- 697.

[57] al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, vol. 1, p. 152; Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-Manthūr*, Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifah, 1365/1945, vol. 6, p. 422.

[58] Badr al-Dīn al-Zarkashī, *al-Burhān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifah, 1415/1994, vol. 1, p. 249.

[59] Ibn Sallām, *Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān*, p. 190, al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, vol. 2, p. 52.

[60] Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 3, p. 530; ibn Sallām, *Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān*, p. 192. The *musabbihat* refers to the chapters that begin with the praise (*tasbīḥ*) of God, that is chapters 57, 59, 61, 62, 64.

It has been narrated from Ḥudhayfah ibn Yamān that *Sūrat al-Tawbah* used to be three[61] or four times longer than its present length.[62]

In another tradition narrated by Mālik ibn Anas it is mentioned that *al-Tawbah* used to be the same length as *Sūrat al-Baqarah* and the *basmalah* had been lost from the beginning of the chapter.[63] The same has been narrated about *Sūrat al-Aḥzāb* as well.[64]

Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal[65] and others[66] narrate from Ubay ibn Ka'b that 'There were other verses in the chapter of *al-Bayyinah*'. Al-Tirmidhī says this tradition is good (*ḥasan*) and authentic (*ṣaḥīḥ*).[67] Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī says that Ibn Mas'ūd had written the verse *law anna ibn Adam sa'ala wadiyan...* in his copy of the Qur'an.[68]

In a few traditions from Imām 'Alī (a),[69] 'Ā'ishāh,[70] and 'Umar,[71] it has been narrated that some verses were lost from the Qur'an.

According to one narration, 'Umar recalled a verse about the punishment of stoning for adultery, claiming: 'If it was not for people saying that 'Umar has added verses to the Qur'an, I would have added it [to the Qur'an] with my own hands.'[72]

Among these traditions, references to alteration and deletion of some words and sentences can be seen.[73] Qāsim ibn Sallām mentions 124

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[61] al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-Manthūr*, vol. 4, p. 121.

[62] Ibid., p. 120; Nayshābūrī, *al-Mustadrak*, vol. 2, p. 331.

[63] al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, vol. 1, p. 142.

[64] Ibid., vol. 5, p. 180; ibn Sallām, *Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān*, p. 190-191; Nayshābūrī, *al-Mustadrak*, vol. 2, p. 415.

[65] Ṭayālisī, *Musnad*, vol. 5, p. 131-132.

[66] Nayshābūrī, *al-Mustadrak*, vol. 2, p. 531; Nūr al-Dīn al-Haythamī, *Majma' al-Zawā'id*, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1408/1987, vol. 7, p. 140.

[67] Abū 'Isā al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1402/1981, vol. 5, p. 370.

[68] Iṣfahānī, *Muḥāḍirāt al-Udabā'*, vol. 5, p. 448. The full verse supposedly read: 'If the son of Adam requests a land full of wealth and he is given it, he wants a second land; and if another one is given to him, he desires a third one; and nothing satisfies human beings except dust. And Allāh accepts whoever repents to him. This is the firm religion without any deviation, neither Christianity nor Judaism.'

[69] Ibn Sallām, *Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān*, p. 189.

[70] Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 3, p. 100.

[71] al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-Manthūr*, vol. 1, p. 106.

[72] al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 8, p. 113; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 6, p. 162-163; ibn Abī Shaybah, *al-Muṣānnaf*, vol. 8, p. 570.

[73] Ibn Ḥajar al-'Āsqalānī, *Fatḥ al-Bārī*, Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifah, n.d., vol. 1, p. 217; al-Mutaqqī al-Hindī, *Kanz al-'Ummāl*, ed. S. al-Saqqā', Beirut: al-Risalāh, 1413/1992, vol. 2, pp. 569, 594.

occasions of this in the chapter entitled *al-Zawā'id min al-Ḥurūf allatī Khulifa bihā al-Khaṭṭ fī al-Qur'ān* in his book *Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān.*[74]

Although Sunni scholars have different views about the authenticity of these traditions,[75] they are all of the opinion that the content of these traditions do not point to the actual distortion of the Qur'anic words. Rather, they have interpreted the content of these traditions in different ways. For example, some Sunni scholars consider these traditions to simply be exegesis of the Qur'an,[76] while others consider them as being mixed with *ḥadīth* literature; Naḥḥās, for example, comments regarding the verse of stoning that '... it is an established tradition (*sunnah*).'[77] Zubaydī,[78] Muslim,[79] and others have the same opinion with regard to the verse of the two valleys of the son of Adam. Some Sunni scholars believe that these traditions represent non-Qur'anic revelations *(aḥādīth qudsiyyah*);[80] while others still have rejected them as fabricated and weak narrations.[81]

However, most scholars from the Sunni school of thought rely on the concept of *naskh al-tilāwah* (abrogation of recitation) to justify the traditions that refer to parts of the Qur'an that have gone missing. According to this theory, these verses were initially revealed and then either their words with their rulings were abrogated (known as 'abrogation of recitation with its ruling'), or in some cases, only had their recitation abrogated while their ruling remained (known as 'abrogation

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[74] Ibn Sallām, *Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān*, pp. 162-190; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, vol. 1, pp. 52-55; al-Ālūsī, *Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī*, vol. 1, p. 46.

[75] Arthur Jeffrey (ed.), *Muqaddamatān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, Cairo: Dār al-Sawi, 1954, p. 83; ibn Ḥazm al-Andalūsī, *al-Muḥalla bil-Āthār*, ed. A. Shākir, Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, vol. 10, pp. 14-16; Naḥḥās, *al-Nāsikh wa al-Mansūkh*, vol. 1, p. 438.

[76] Ibn Sallām, *Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān*, p. 195

[77] Naḥḥās, *al-Nāsikh wa al-Mansūkh*, vol. 1, p. 438; Jeffrey, *Muqaddamatān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, p. 79.

[78] Jeffrey, *Muqaddamatān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, p. 85.

[79] Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 3, p. 100; ibn Ḥibbān, Muḥammad, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, n.p.: al-Risalāh, 1414/1993, vol. 8, p. 28.

[80] E.g. 'Abd Allāh ibn Muslim Ibn Qutaybah, *Ta'wīl Mukhtalif al-Ḥadīth*, ed. I. As'ardi, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, n.d., p. 292; Jeffrey, *Muqaddamatān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, p. 85-86.

[81] E.g. al-Ālūsī, *Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī*, vol. 12, p. 217; Fatḥ Allāh Najjarzadegan, *Salāmah al-Qur'ān min al-Taḥrīf*, Tehran: Mash'ar, 1424/2003, p. 206.

of recitation without its ruling'). Among Sunni scholars who hold this view are Ibn Ḥazm,[82] al-Zurqānī,[83] Abū Shāmah,[84] and al-Suyūṭī.[85]

Some of the early and contemporary Sunni scholars have rejected this idea arguing that firstly, these traditions have been narrated through isolated chains of narration and trying to prove that something is a verse of the Qur'an, or that a verse has been abrogated is not possible based on such narrations.[86] Secondly, the content of the supposed verses is not compatible with the verses of the Qur'an.[87] Thirdly, the abrogation of Qura'nic verses is exclusive to the time of their revelation whereas the type and quality of some of these traditions refer to their abrogation after the demise of the Prophet (s).[88]

Shi'i scholars have unanimously and unequivocally rejected all of these traditions in every case where no appropriate *ta'wīl* (interpretation) can be presented; from among the early Shi'i scholars, we can mention Faḍl ibn Shādhān (d. 206/821);[89] Sayyid Murtaḍā (d. 436/1044),[90] and al-Ṭabrisī (d. 538/1143) as examples.[91] 'Alī ibn Ṭāwūs al-Ḥillī (d. 664 AH) had also discussed the issue of the *basmalah* in the Qur'an,[92] and 'Allāmah al-Ḥillī (d. 726/1325) had analysed the issue of the two supposed chapters of *Khal'* and *Hafd.*[93]

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[82] Ibn Ḥazm, *al-Muḥalla*, vol. 11, p. 235.

[83] Muḥammad al-Zurqānī, *Manāhil al-'Irfān*, ed. A. Shams al-Dīn, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1416/1995, vol. 2, p. 214-215.

[84] Abū Shāmah, *al-Murshid al-Wajīz*, p. 42.

[85] al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, vol. 2, p. 52.

[86] Ṣubḥī Ṣāliḥ, *Mabāhith fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, Beirut: Dār al-'Ilm lil-Malāyīn, 1968, pp. 265-266; Muṣṭafā Zayd, *al-Naskh fī al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*, Beirut: Dār al-Wafā', 1408/1987, vol. 1, p. 283; al-Zarkashī, *al-Burhān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, vol. 2, p. 39-40.

[87] Ṣāliḥ, *Mabāhith fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, pp. 265-266.

[88] Ibn Sallām, *Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān*, pp.190-191; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, vol. 2, pp. 52-56; Naḥḥās, *al-Nāsikh wa al-Mansūkh*, vol. 1, pp. 443-446.

[89] al-Faḍl ibn Shādhān, *al-Īḍāḥ*, ed. H. al-Urmawī: Tehran Universiy, 1363 AH (Solar)/1984, p. 229, where he negates what has been said about Ibn Mas'ūd leaving out the two chapters of al-Falaq and al-Nas (*mu'awwidhatayn*).

[90] Najjarzadegan, *Salāmah al-Qur'ān min al-Taḥrīf*, p. 226.

[91] al-Faḍl ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṭabrisī, *Majma' al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, Beirut: al-'Alamī, 1415/1994, vol. 1, pp. 83-84, where al-Ṭabrisī categorically refutes the presence of mistakes in the phrases and words of the Qur'an.

[92] 'Alī ibn Ṭāwūs, *Sa'd al-Su'ūd*, Qum: Dalil, 1421/2000, p. 292.

[93] Jamāl al-Dīn al-Ḥillī, *Tadhkirah al-Fuqahā'*, Qum: Al al-Bayt li-Iḥyā' al-Turāth, 1414/1993, vol. 3, p. 263.

From among contemporary Shi'i scholars, the following can be mentioned: Muḥammad Jawād Balāghī (d. 1352/1933),[94] Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī (d. 1402/1981),[95] Abū al-Qāsim al-Khu'ī (d. 1413/1992),[96] Murtaḍā al-'Askarī,[97] Muḥammad Hādī Ma'rifat,[98] and 'Abd Allāh Jawādī Āmulī.[99]

4. Shortcomings in the compilation of the Qur'an

Some believe that the compilation of the Qur'an by the first caliph, and the subsequent unification of the Qur'anic codices by the third, suffered from shortcomings that corrupted the original Qur'anic text.[100]

Assuming that the Qur'an was compiled for the first time during the era of Abū Bakr, then without a doubt any person or group of people who compiled the Qur'an would have collected through multiple attestation (*tawātur*) everything about the Qur'an that was available, thus removing any doubts that one may have about its compilation.[101]

On the other hand, if we accept the view of Sayyid Murtaḍā and others who maintain that the Qur'an was compiled during the time of the Prophet (s),[102] then all of these disputes effectively become null and void.

Similarly, arguments concerning the distortion of the Qur'an during the 'Uthmānic standardisation have little historical support.[103] The aim of that project was to abolish incorrect recitations of the Qur'an and to unify the Qur'anic script by removing commentary and explanations

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[94] Muḥammad Jawād Balāghī, *Ālā' al-Raḥmān*, Tehran: Bi'thah, 1420/1999, vol. 1, pp. 227-228; Muḥammad Jawād Balāghī, *al-Hudā ilā Dīn al-Muṣṭafā*, Beirut: al-A'lāmi, 1405/1984, pp. 123-124.

[95] Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *al-Mizān*, Beirut: al-A'lāmi, 1393/1973, vol. 12, p. 117.

[96] al-Khu'ī, *al-Bayān*, pp. 206-235.

[97] 'Askarī, *al-Qur'ān al-Karīm wa Riwāyāt al-Madrasatayn*, vol. 2, pp. 40-67, 631-630.

[98] Muḥammad Hādī Ma'rifat, *Ṣiyānat al-Qur'ān min al-Taḥrīf*, Qum: Nashr-i Islāmī, 1413/1992, pp. 158-162.

[99] Jawādī Āmulī, *Nazāhat-i Qur'ān az Taḥrīf*, pp. 142-154.

[100] Mīrzā Ḥusayn al-Nūrī, *Faṣl al-Khiṭāb* (lithograph), pp. 141, 147.

[101] al-Khu'ī, *al-Bayān*, p. 257.

[102] al-Ṭabrisī, *Majma' al-Bayān*, vol. 1, p. 84.

[103] Riḍwān, *Āra' al-Mustashriqīn*, vol. 1, pp. 465- 480; 'Ināyah, *Shubuhāt ḥawl al-Qur'ān*, p. 46.

that were written alongside the verses in some personal copies, without in any way affecting or changing the actual text of the Qur'an.[104]

5. Difference in personal copies (*muṣḥafs*) of the Qur'an belonging to the Companions

Some have pointed to narrations about personal copies of the Qur'an belonging to Imām 'Alī (a),'Abd Allāh Ibn Mas'ūd, and Ubay ibn Ka'b as evidence for the distortion of the Qur'an.[105]

According to both Sunni and Shi'i sources, there is no doubt that Imām 'Alī (a) had his own personal copy of the Qur'an;[106] however, the additions that are mentioned in the traditions can all be considered as simply being *tafsīr* or *ta'wīl*.[107]

The alleged inconsistences that existed in the personal copies of Ibn Mas'ūd and Ubay ibn Ka'b are also merely exegetical additions or synonyms of some difficult words or terms written alongside the text to facilitate understanding.

As for the authenticity of narrations that speak about the content of these personal copies, Sunni scholars are divided in this regard. Some reject the traditions,[108] while others accept them and look for different explanations and justifications for them.[109]

With regard to Ibn Mas'ūd's omission of some chapters of the Qur'an from his copy, most Sunni commentators assert that Ibn Mas'ūd merely did not include these chapters in his copy, which does not necessarily indicate a belief on his part that they were not part of the Qur'an. Although it is possible that the *tawātur* of these chapters had not been established for him,[110] it is equally possible that because they were so well-known he decided to exclude them. What is certain is that it is highly improbable for Ibn Mas'ūd alone to have been correct in the

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[104] al-Khu'ī, *al-Bayān*, pp. 257-258.

[105] Nūrī, *Faṣl al-Khiṭāb*, pp. 120, 124.

[106] Ignaz Goldziher, *Madhāhib al-Tafsīr al-Islāmī*, trans. A. al-Najjār, Cairo: Maktabah al-Khaniji, 1374/1954, p. 296; Najjarzadegan, *Salāmah al-Qur'ān min al-Taḥrīf*, pp. 412-420.

[107] Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Nu'mān (Shaykh al-Mufīd), *Awā'il al-Maqālāt*, Beirut: Dār al-Mufīd, 1414/1993, p. 93; al-Fayḍ al-Kāshānī, *Tafsīr al-Ṣāfī*, Beirut: A'lāmi, 1402/1981, vol. 1, p. 52; al-Khu'ī, *al-Bayān*, p. 223.

[108] al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, vol. 1, p. 172; Ibn Qutaybah, *Ta'wīl Mushkil al-Qur'ān*, p. 43.

[109] al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, vol. 1, p. 173.

[110] Ibn Qutaybah, *Ta'wīl Mushkil al-Qur'ān*, pp. 42-43, 49; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, vol. 1, p. 173.

exclusion of these chapters and for all of the Companions to have erred in their inclusion of them.

In some narrations, there is mention of something called the *muṣḥaf* of Fāṭima (a). Some authors have misunderstood this concept and have taken it as proof of Shi'i belief in *taḥrīf*.[111] However, in reality, the term *muṣḥaf* here is not referring to a copy of the Qur'an, as is evident from the narrations that speak about this *muṣḥaf*. Rather, what is meant by the *muṣḥaf* of Fāṭima (a) is a collection of information inspired to her – after the death of the Prophet (s) – by an angel that would appear and tell her about future events, and Imām 'Alī (a) wrote this all down.[112]

TRADITIONS ALLUDING TO THE DISTORTION OF THE QUR'AN IN SHI'I WORKS

Some are of the opinion that the book of Sulaym ibn Qays, one of the earliest (1st century) extant Shi'i works, challenges the immunity of the Qur'an from distortion[113] because the work has three separate narrations discussing the *muṣḥaf* of Imām 'Alī (a).[114] This argument hinges on, firstly, the work actually being attributable to Sulaym ibn Qays, and secondly, on the assumption that the *muṣḥaf* of Imām 'Alī (a) differed in content from the present Qur'an.

After the book of Sulaym, the oldest source in this regard is *al-Taḥrīf wa al-Tabdīl* by Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Sayrafī. Faḍl ibn Shādhān (d. 206/821), the famous Shi'i theologian, penned an apologetic work dealing with narrations that indicate *taḥrīf* in Sunni books.[115] In the second half of the 2nd century we find the *Kitāb al-Qirā'at* of Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Sayyārī (d. 268/881),[116] the *Kitāb al-Taḥrīf* of Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Khālid al-Barqī (d. 276/889),[117] and later, the *Kitāb al-Tanzīl min al-Qur'ān wa al-Taḥrīf* by 'Alī ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Faḍḍal (d. end of the 3rd century)[118] dealing with the issue of *taḥrīf*. Some have

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[111] Goldziher, *Madhāhib al-Tafsīr al-Islāmī*, p. 301; Māl Allāh, *al-Shī'a wa Taḥrīf al-Qur'ān*, pp. 62-63.
[112] Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, p. 240.
[113] Ghaffārī, *Uṣūl Madhhab al-Shī'a*, vol. 1, pp. 233, 288, vol. 3, p. 1281.
[114] Sulaym ibn Qays al-Hilālī, *Kitāb Sulaym ibn Qays*, Qum: al-Hādī 1420/1999, p. 147.
[115] al-Faḍl ibn Shādhān, *al-Īḍāḥ*, pp.209-229.
[116] Aḥmad ibn 'Alī al-Najāshī, *al-Rijāl*, Qum: Nashr-i Islāmī, 1418/1997, p. 80.
[117] Ibid., p. 76.
[118] Ibid., p. 257-258.

simply referred to the titles of these works as indication of their authors' belief in *taḥrīf*.[119]

Without delving into complex discussions regarding the reliability of some of these individuals (like al-Sayyārī, who is unanimously considered weak,[120] or Khālid al-Barqī,who narrates from individuals considered weak in transmission and relies on *mursal* narrations),[121] we may here simply and briefly note that the titles of these books do not necessarily indicate a belief in *taḥrīf* (even though the books of al-Sayrafī and al-Barqī seemingly allude to this). Furthermore, we may also note a discrepancy regarding the names of some of these books as discussed in the sources; for example the book of al-Barqī is referred to by Shaykh al-Ṭūsī as *Kitāb al-Maʿānī wa al-Taḥrīf*[122] and by Ibn al-Nadīm as *Kitāb Maʿānī al-Aḥādīth wa al-Taḥrīf*.[123]

Finally we may note that to prove the authors' belief in textual corruption of the Qur'an it needs to be proven that by *taḥrīf* or *tabdil* they mean the alteration of the very words of the Qur'an (as opposed to its meaning, interpretation etc.).

Be as it may, currently, apart from the book of Sayyārī, all OF the other books have been lost. However, by examining the content of the traditions mentioned in the book of Sayyārī, as well as other similar traditions which can be found in later sources, it can be said with confidence that they do not speak of *taḥrīf* in the sense of textual corruption. Rather the *taḥrīf* being alluded to in those traditions is the distortion of the meaning of the Qur'an; in other words, it is interpreting the verses contrary to what God intended them to mean, and it is equal to exegesis based on personal opinion (*tafsīr bil-ra'y*).

The commentary of ʿAlī ibn Ibrāhīm al-Qummī (d. 310/922) has also been mentioned by Nūrī as a work whose author believes in the distortion of the Qur'an.[124] However, the extant *Tafsīr al-Qummī* we have now is not that of ʿAlī ibn Ibrāhīm but rather the work of ʿAlī ibn Ḥātam al-Qazwīnī who has narrated it from Abū al-Faḍl al-ʿAbbās al-

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[119] Nūrī, *Faṣl al-Khiṭāb*, p. 25-29.

[120] Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, *al-Fihrist*, ed. J. al-Qayyūmī, n.p.: Nashr al-Faqahah, 1417/1996, p. 51; Najāshī, *al-Rijāl*, p. 258.

[121] Ṭūsī, *al-Fihrist*, p. 62; Najāshī, *al-Rijāl*, p. 76. A *mursal* narration is one that contains at least one missing 'link' in its chain.

[122] Ṭūsī, *al-Fihrist*, p. 63.

[123] Ibid., p. 277.

[124] Nūrī, *Faṣl al-Khiṭāb*, p. 25; Kāshānī, *al-Ṣāfī*, vol. 1, p. 52.

'Alawī who in turn narrated it from 'Alī ibn Ibrāhīm.[125] The author of this commentary, whom we may consider as an indirect pupil of 'Alī ibn Ibrāhīm, used at least three commentaries that he had at hand: the *Tafsīr* of 'Alī ibn Ibrāhīm, the *Tafsīr* of Abū al-Jārūd (Ziyād ibn Mundhir) and the *Tafsīr* of Furāt al-Kūfī (who was contemporary to Kulaynī).[126] Qazwīnī, who has included in this compilation his own exegetical views,[127] has also often quoted 'Alī ibn Ibrāhīm, either directly[128] or indirectly.[129] Due to this fact, the work later became known as the *Tafsīr* of 'Alī ibn Ibrāhīm al-Qummī.[130] In light of all of this it is untenable to attribute a belief in *taḥrīf* to 'Alī Ibrāhīm based simply on the *Tafsīr*.

Kulaynī is another Shi'i scholar who has been accused of believing in the distortion of the Qur'an because of some of the chapters and traditions mentioned in his book *al-Kāfī*.[131]

However this claim is also problematic. This is firstly because the aim of Kulaynī in *al-Kāfī* was not to reject or to criticize any of the traditions included in his work. Secondly, the inclusion of narrations in *ḥadīth* compilations should not automatically be taken to imply that the compiler of the book believed in the authenticity of those traditions. Even though one may argue that a responsible author should take care to only mention reliable narrations in his work, we must also take care to note that the authenticity of a chain of narration (which may be an author's criteria for selecting traditions for inclusion) is not final proof for the validity of the content (*matn*) of said narrations, especially if the content of these narrations is contradicted by other traditions, in the very same book no less.

Strangely enough none of the chapters in *al-Kāfī* are called *Taḥrīf al-Qur'ān* (Distortion of the Qur'an) or anything similar. Those who have asserted that Kulaynī believes in distortion of the Qur'an have resigned themselves to referring to the chapter entitled 'No one except the

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[125] Qummī, *Tafsīr*, vol. 1, p. 55; Muḥammad Hādī Ma'rifat, *Tafsīr va Mufassirān*, Qum: al-Tamhīd, 1373 AH (Solar)/1994, vol. 2, p. 184.

[126] See for example Qummī, *Tafsīr*, vol. 1, pp. 129, 147, vol. 2, pp. 21, 26.

[127] Ibid., vol. 1, p. 367, vol. 2, p. 303.

[128] E.g. Ibid., vol. 1, p. 327, vol. 2, pp. 20, 101, 111.

[129] E.g. Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 55, 79, 89, vol. 2, pp. 152, 153-156.

[130] For more information see: Ḥaddād 'Ādel et al (eds.), *Dānishnāmih-yi Jahān-i Islām*, Tehran: Bunyād-i Dā'irah al-Ma'ārif al-Islāmī, 1378 AH (Solar)/1999, vol. 7, pp. 700-703.

[131] Nūrī, *Faṣl al-Khiṭāb*, pp. 25-26; Ghaffārī, *Uṣūl Madhhab al-Shī'a*, vol. 1, pp. 277-278; Māl Allāh, *al-Shī'a wa Taḥrīf al-Qur'ān*, p. 62.

infallible Imams have gathered the Qur'an and they have all of the knowledge of the Qur'an.'[132]

Evidently this chapter has no relation with the concept of distortion in the manner that we are concerned with here, since the traditions mentioned in this chapter explain that the interpretation (*ta'wīl*) and understanding, apparent (*ẓāhir*) and hidden (*bāṭin*) knowledge of the Qur'an, and the knowledge of all of the sciences of the Qur'an, are with the Household of the Prophet (a) and there is no one like them when it comes to understanding the verses of the Qur'an - none of these traditions mention textual corruption of the Qur'an.[133]

This is confirmed by the fact that the chapter attributes the gathering of the Qur'an (*jam' al-Qur'ān*) to all of the Imams, and since not all of them lived in the time of its revelation we know that it is not speaking about the actual compilation of the Qur'an. Perhaps it is because of this that scholars such as Ṣadūq, Sayyid Murtaḍā and Ṭūsī, despite having access to *al-Kāfī*, did not conclude from these traditions and the titles of the chapters that the Qur'an had been distorted.[134]

As for the traditions that Kulaynī has mentioned in the chapter entitled '*Fīhi Nukāt wa Nutaf min al-Tanzīl fī al-Wilāyah*', which have been referred to and referenced by Nūrī and some polemicists to prove the distortion of the Qur'an, virtually all of them suffer from having weak chains of transmission and/or are indecisive in their implications.[135] Out of these traditions only five are categorized as authentic by 'Allāmah Majlisī,[136] and these five have nothing to do with the distortion of the Qur'an as per our current discussion.

Finally we can also mention 'Alī ibn Aḥmad al-Kūfī (d. 352/963). Najāshī, despite referring to him as an extremist (*ghālī*) and labelling

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[132] Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, p. 228. In Arabic: *Innahu lam yajma' al-Qur'āna kulluhu illā al-a'immah ('alayhim al-salam) wa innahum ya'lamūna 'ilmahu kulluh.*

[133] Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, p. 228.

[134] Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn Bābawayh (Shaykh Ṣadūq), *Man Lā Yaḥḍuruh al-Faqīh*, Qum: Nashr-i Islāmī, 1404/1983, vol. 4, pp. 203, 223; 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Murtaḍā, *Rasā'il al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā*, Qum: Dār al-Qur'an, 1405/1984, vol. 1, pp. 210-211; Ṭūsī, *al-Fihrist*, p. 61.

[135] Nūrī, *Faṣl al-Khiṭāb*, p. 25; Ghaffārī, *Uṣūl Madhhab al-Shī'a*, vol. 1, p. 286; Māl Allāh, *al-Shī'a wa Taḥrīf al-Qur'ān*, pp. 62-63.

[136] Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī,[136] *Mir'āt al-'Uqūl*, Tehran: Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmiyyah, 1363 AH (Solar)/1984, vol. 5, pp. 2-162. That is narrations number 17, 72, 74, 80, and 83.

most of his books as deviated; makes mention of one of his books called *al-Tabdīl wa al-Taḥrīf.*[137]

Significantly, it seems Ibn Shahrāshūb refers to the same book with the title al-Radd 'alā Ahl al-Tabdīl wa al-Taḥrīf fīmā Waqa'a min Ahl al-Ta'līf.[138] Thus the work of 'Alī ibn Aḥmad al-Kūfī, as indicated by the title (like the other books we dealt with earlier), is suggestive of distortion in meaning rather than textual corruption.

A new period began around the era of Shaykh Ṣadūq (d. 386/996), that we may refer to as the period of 'Critique and Opinion'. Ṣadūq worked on explaining and interpreting traditions which seemingly alluded to the distortion of the Qur'an, and speaking for other Shi'i scholars declared in no unclear terms: "Whoever says that we the Shi'a believe the that Qur'an is more than what we currently have, is a liar."[139]

As is apparent from the quote, we can see that even at that time the Shi'a had been accused of believing in the distortion of the Qur'an.

Abū al-Ḥusayn 'Abd al-Raḥīm, known as al-Khayyāṭ al-Mu'tazilī (d. ca. 300/912), is possibly the first person to have accused the Shi'a of believing in some addition to the Qur'an.[140]

At the same time the famous Mu'tazilite, Abū 'Alī al-Jubbā'ī (d. 303/915) – as reported to us by Ibn Ṭāwūs – also accused the Shi'a of believing in distortion, alteration, change and loss of parts of the Qur'an.[141]

Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī (d. 324/935) also stated:

> The *rāfiḍah* (i.e, the Shi'a), disagree concerning the Qur'an: has there been addition to it or omission? They are (divided into) three categories: 1) The first group says that something has been omitted from the Qur'an, but nothing can be added to it, nor changed in it. As for something having been lost from it, much of it has been lost, and the Imām has knowledge of it. 2)... 3) As for the third group, they believe in *i'tizāl* and *imāmah* and believe that nothing of the Qur'an has been lost, nor has anything been

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[137] Najāshī, *Rijāl*, p. 265.

[138] Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn Shahrāshūb, *Ma'ālim al-'Ulamā'*, Qum: n.p., n.d., p. 99.

[139] Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn Bābawayh (Shaykh Ṣadūq), *al-I'tiqādāt*, ed. I. 'Abd al-Sayyid, Beirut: Dār al-Mufīd, 1414/1993, p. 84; Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn Bābawayh (Shaykh Ṣadūq), *Ma'ānī al-Akhbār*, Qum: Nashr-i Islāmī, 1361 AH (Solar)/1982, p. 133.

[140] al-Khayyāṭ, 'Abd al-Raḥīm ibn Muḥammad, *al-Intiṣār wa al-Radd 'alā ibn al-Rāwandī al-Mulḥid*, Cairo: al-Thaqāfah al-Dīniyyah 1988, pp. 37-38, 166-231.

[141] Ibn Ṭāwūs, *Sa'd al-Su'ūd*, p. 291.

> added to it, and it is as was revealed by God to his Prophet (s), not having been changed or altered...[142]

Bāqillānī (d. 403/1012), on one hand says that the *rāfiḍah* believe that parts of the Qur'an have been lost, but on the other hand notes: "Most of the Shi'a, based on the sayings of the Infallibles, do not believe anything has been taken away from the Qur'an, nor has anything been added to it."[143]

As a final example of these accusations, which most likely have been influenced by sectarian disputes and arguments, we may mention the statement of Ibn Ḥazm (d. 456/1063) who – based on insufficient information about the opinions of Shi'i exegetes – claimed that all of the Shi'a apart from Shaykh Ṣadūq, Sayyid Murtaḍā (d. 438/1046) and two of his contemporaries (Abū Ya'la al-Ṭūsī and Abū al-Qāsim al-Rāzī) believe that there have been alterations to the Qur'an, that is, something has been added to it, taken away from it, or changed.[144] This, while in Shi'i sources up to the time of Ibn Ḥazm, meaning the lack of any alteration to the Qur'an has clearly been mentioned as part of the Shi'a doctrine.[145]

The Safavid period (906–1134/1500-1721), provided Shi'i scholars a great opportunity to collect and compile traditions, and in this time some narrations which seemingly implied the distortion of the Qur'an were also collected and placed in the books of tradition,[146] of narrative exegesis, and commentaries on *ḥadīth*.[147] Only very few Shi'i scholars, most notably Ni'mat Allāh al-Jazā'irī (d. 1112/1700)[148] and Abū al-Ḥasan al-Futūnī (d. 1138/1725)[149] became inclined to make reference to these narrations as evidence for the distortion of the Qur'an. Apart from these few, the vast majority of Shi'i scholars spared no effort to explain these

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[142] Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt al-Islamiyyīn*, ed. M. 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, Beirut: al-Maktabah 'Aṣriyyah, 1990, vol. 1, pp. 120-121. [Editor's note: number 2 has been omitted in the original text, and not merely here.]

[143] Bāqillānī, *Nukāt al-Intiṣār*, pp. 240-241.

[144] Ibn Ḥazm, *al-Fiṣāl fī al-Milal*, vol. 4, p. 182.

[145] Ibn Bābawayh, *Ma'ānī al-Akhbār*, p. 133; *al-Masā'il al-Sirrawwiyyah*, p. 78; *al-Tibyān*, vol. 1, p. 3.

[146] Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1403/1982, vol. 89, pp. 40-77, 114-116.

[147] Hāshim al-Baḥrānī, *al-Burhān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, Qum: al-Bi'thah, 1415/1994, vol. 1, pp. 33, 51-53.

[148] Ni'mat Allāh al-Jazā'irī, *al-Anwār al-Ni'māniyyah*, Tabrīz: Shirikat-i Chāp, n.d., vol. 1, pp. 97-98, 277, vol. 2, p. 358.

[149] Abū al-Ḥasan al-Nabātī, *Mir'āt al-Anwār wa Mishkāt al-Asrār (Introduction of Tafsīr of al-Burhān)*, Beirut: A'lāmi, 1419/1998, pp. 83-85.

traditions and interpret them correctly, and all of them testified that the Qur'an has not been distorted.

The only serious challenge to this consensus came from Muḥaddith al-Nūrī's (d.1320/1902) book *Faṣl al-Khiṭāb*, written with the express purpose of proving that the Qur'an had been distorted. His book consists of twelve chapters dealing with different aspects of *taḥrīf*, in each reference is made to various narrations to support the arguments. The traditions utilized are taken from both Shi'i and Sunni sources, like traditions dealing with the *muṣḥaf* of Imām 'Alī (a). Some sections deal with issues exclusive to concepts found in Sunni traditions, like those about the codices of 'Abd Allāh Ibn Mas'ūd and Ubay ibn Ka'b, or traditions about the compilation of the Qur'an after the demise of the Prophet (s), or the unification of the codices during the time of 'Uthmān and so on. Other sections are dedicated to concepts found only in Shi'i sources, like the successors of the Holy Prophet (s) being mentioned in the previous books, or narrations that generally or specifically (in the opinion of Nūrī) allude to the distortion of the Qur'an.[150]

It is pertinent to note that Nūrī himself admits in his work that he is alone in the path upon which he has embarked[151] and in fact his position is fraught with inconsistences and contradictions. For example, when he attributes a belief in *taḥrīf* to *ḥadīth* compilers,[152] while clearly their task (as discussed) was only to compile traditions.

Carefully examining the narrations found in *Faṣl al-Khiṭāb* we may note that many traditions therein are repetitive, for example with some narrations being included once with a chain of narration and at another time without it, therefore making the amount of traditions contained within it seem more than what it actually is.[153] Secondly, most of the traditions in this book suffer from weak chains, including people like Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Sayyārī,[154] Sahl ibn Ziyād al-Ādamī,[155] Ibrāhīm ibn Isḥāq al-Naḥawandī,[156] Ḥusayn ibn Ḥamdān al-Khaṣibī,[157] Muḥammad ibn 'Alī al-Sayrafī,[158] Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān al-

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[150] Najjarzadegan, *Salāmah al-Qur'ān*, pp. 569-671.
[151] Ibid., pp. 126-130.
[152] Nūrī, *Faṣl al-Khiṭāb*, pp. 25-31.
[153] Balāghī, *Ālā' al-Raḥmān*, vol. 1, p. 65; Ma'rifat, *Ṣiyānah al-Qur'ān*, pp. 239-286.
[154] Najāshī, *Rijāl*, p. 80; 'Āsqalānī, *Lisān al-Mizān*, vol. 1, p. 252.
[155] al-Khu'ī, *Mu'jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, vol. 9, p. 354.
[156] Ibid., vol. 1, p. 186.
[157] Ibid., vol. 6, p. 244.
[158] Ibid., vol. 17, pp. 320-321.

Daylamī[159] and Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Hamzah.[160] Thirdly, many of the sources used by Nūrī for these traditions are of disputed authenticity. In addition to which it is also disputable whether or not they even indicate textual corruption of the Qur'an.[161]

Overall, excluding a few exceptions, the majority of these traditions come from characters that the scholars of tradition regard as unreliable, narrators of weak traditions, of questionable faith, or known to be liars or extremists *(ghulāt)*. In addition to this, it seems that what most of these traditions refer to is the alteration of the meaning and interpretation of the Qur'an,[162] which does not equate to textual corruption. Even if one does not accept any such justification or alternative reading of these traditions, because of their contradiction with the other evidence that exists regarding the immunity of the Qur'an from distortion, they lose validity. It is for this reason that the overwhelming majority of Shi'i scholars do not believe in *taḥrīf* of the Qur'an.[163]

Some of the notable Shi'i scholars who have confirmed the lack of *taḥrīf* in the Qur'an are: Shaykh Ṣadūq (d. 381/991),[164] Sharīf al-Raḍī (d. 406/1015), Shaykh al-Mufīd (d. 413/1022),[165] Sharīf al-Murtaḍā (d. 436/1044),[166] Shaykh al-Ṭūsī (d. 460/1067),[167] Abū al-Futūḥ al-Rāzī (d. 554/1159),[168] al-Ṭabrisī (d. 548/1153),[169] Ibn Idrīs al-Ḥillī (d. ca. 6th/12th

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[159] Ibid., p. 136

[160] Ibid., vol. 6, p. 17; ʿAskarī, *al-Qur'ān wa Riwāyah al-Madrasatayn,* vol. 3, pp. 131-136.

[161] Maʿrifat, *Ṣiyānah al-Qur'ān*, 214-237; al-Khu'ī, *al-Bayān*, pp. 229-235.

[162] ʿAskarī, *al-Qur'ān wa Riwāyah al-Madrasatayn*, vol. 3, pp. 222-223, 847.

[163] Muḥammad Ḥasan al-Āshtīyānī, *Baḥr al-Fawā'id fī Sharḥ al-Farā'id*, Qum: Maktab al-Najafī, 1404/1983, vol. 1, pp. 98-99.

[164] Ibn Bābawayh, *al-Iʿtiqādāt*, p. 84; Ibn Bābawayh, *Maʿānī al-Akhbār*, p. 133.

[165] Ibn al-Nuʿmān, Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad (Shaykh al-Mufīd), *al-Masā'il al-Sirrawwiyya*, Beirut: Dār al-Mufīd, 1414 AH, pp. 83-84; ibn al-Nuʿmān, *Awa'īl al-Maqālāt*, pp. 80-81.

[166] ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Murtaḍā, *al-Dhakhīrah*, Qum: Nashr-i Islāmī, 1411 AH, pp. 361-364.

[167] Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, *al-Tibyān*, ed. A. al-Muṣṭafawī, Tehran: Wizārat-i Irshād, 1374 AH (Solar), vol. 1, p. 3.

[168] Abū al-Futūḥ al-Rāzī, *Rawḍ al-Jinān*, Mashhad: Āstan-i Quds-i Raḍawī, 1375 AH (Solar), vol. 11, p. 311.

[169] al-Ṭabrisī, *Majmaʿ al-Bayān*, vol. 1, p. 43; al-Faḍl ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṭabrisī, *Jawāmiʿ al-Jāmiʿ*, Qum: al-Nashr al-Islāmī, 1418 AH, vol. 1, p. 698.

century),[170] Ibn Shahrāshūb (d. 588/1192),[171] 'Abd al-Jalīl al-Qazwīnī al-Rāzī (d. after 560/1164),[172] 'Alī ibn Ṭāwūs (d. 664/1265),[173] Sadīd al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. early 7th/13th century),[174] Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī author of *Nahj al-Bayān 'an Kashf Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān*, (d. 640/1242),[175] Fāḍil Miqdād al-Suyūrī (d. 826/1422),[176] Bayāḍī al-'Āmilī (d. 877/1472),[177] Kamāl al-Dīn al-Kāshifī (d. ~ 9th century),[178] 'Alī ibn 'Abd al-'Alī Muḥaqqiq al-Thānī (d. 940 AH),[179] Mullā Fatḥ Allāh al-Kāshānī (d. 988/1580),[180] Muḥaqqiq Ardabilī (d. 933/1526), [181] Muḥammad ibn 'Alī al-Naqī al-Shaybānī (d. before 994/1537),[182] Abū al-Ḥasan al-Jurjānī (10th/16th century),[183] Abū Fayḍ al-Nakūrī (d. 1004/1595),[184] Qāḍī Nūr Allāh al-Shushtarī (d. 1019/1610),[185] Shaykh Bahā'ī (d. 1030/1620),[186] Ṣadr al-Dīn al-

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[170] Ibn Idrīs al-Ḥillī, *al-Muntakhab fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, Qum: Sayyid al-Shuhadā', 1409 AH, vol. 2, p. 246.

[171] Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn Shahrāshūb, *Mutashābih al-Qur'ān wa Mukhtalifah*, Qum: Bidār, 1410 AH, vol. 2, p. 77.

[172] 'Abd al-Jalīl al-Qazwīnī, *al-Naqd*, ed. Ḥusaynī Urmawī, n.p.: Chapkhānih-yi Sipihr, 1371 AH, p. 291.

[173] Ibn Ṭāwūs, *Sa'd al-Su'ūd*, p. 291.

[174] Sadīd al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Munqidh min al-Taqlīd*, Qum: Nashr-i Islāmī, 1416 AH, p. 476- 480.

[175] 'Alī al-Mīlānī, *al-Taḥqīq fī Nāfyī al-Taḥrīf 'an al-Qur'ān al-Sharīf*, n.p.: Dār al-Qur'ān al-Karīm, n.d., p. 15.

[176] Fāḍil Miqdād al-Suyūrī, *Kanz al-'Irfān fī Fiqh al-Qur'ān*, Tehran: Murtaḍāwī, 1373 AH (Solar)/1994, vol. 1, p 5.

[177] Zayn al-Dīn al-Nabātī, *al-Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm*, al-Maktabah al-Murtaḍāwīyyah, 1384/1964, vol. 1, p. 45.

[178] Ḥusayn Kāshifī, *al-Mawāhib al-'Alīyyah*, Tehran: Iqbāl, n.d., vol. 2, pp. 335-336.

[179] Mīlānī, *al-Taḥqīq fī Nafy al-Taḥrīf*, p. 16.

[180] Fatḥ Allāh al-Kāshānī, *Manhaj al-Ṣādiqīn*, ed. M. Ghaffārī, Tehran: Intishārāt 'Ilmiyyah Islāmiyyah, 1385/1965, vol. 5, p. 154.

[181] Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Ardabīlī, *Majma' al-Fā'idah wa al-Burhān*, ed. M. Iraqi et al, Qum: Nashr-i Islāmī, 1416/1995, vol. 2, pp. 217-218.

[182] al-Naqī al-Shaybānī, *Mukhtaṣar Nahj al-Bayān*, Dār al-Uswah, 1376 AH (Solar)/1997, p. 262.

[183] al-Jurjānī, Ḥusayn ibn al-Ḥasan, *Jalā' al-Adhhān*, ed. H. Urmawī, Tehran: 1377 AH (Solar)/1998, vol. 5, p. 128.

[184] al-Fayḍ al-Nakūrī, *Ṣawāṭi' al-Ilhām*, ed. M. Shīrāzī, n.p.: n.p., 1417/1996, vol. 3, p. 214.

[185] Balāghī, *Ālā' al-Raḥmān*, vol. 1, pp. 64-65; al-Hindī, Raḥmat Allāh, *Iẓhār al-Ḥaqq*, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1413/1992, p. 355.

[186] Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Bahā'ī, *Zubdah al-Uṣūl*, Qum: Mirsad, 1423/2002, p. 86.

Shīrāzī (d. 1050/1640),[187] Fāḍil al-Tūnī (d.1071/1660),[188] Muḥammad Muḥsin Fayḍ al-Kāshānī (d. 1090/1679),[189] Sharīf Lāhījī (d. ca. 1097/1685),[190] Ḥurr al-'Āmilī (d. 1104/1692),[191] Muḥammad ibn Murtaḍā al-Kāshānī Qum: al-Hādī, 1377 AH, vol. 3, p. 184. (d. 1115/1703),[192] Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Riḍā al-Qummī al-Mashhadī (12th/18th century),[193] Ja'far al-Kabīr (d. 1225/1810),[194] Muḥsin al-Kāẓimī (d. 1228/1813),[195] Muḥsin al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī (d. 1242/1826),[196] Ibrāhīm al-Kālbāsī (d. 1262/1845),[197] Ḥusayn Kūhkamarī (d. 1299/1881),[198] Muḥaqqiq al-Tabrīzī (d. 1307/1889),[199] Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Shāhristānī (d. 1315/1897),[200] Muḥammad Ḥasan al-Āshtīyānī (d. 1319/1901),[201] Muḥammad Jawād al-Ḥusaynī al-'Āmilī (d. ca. 1366/1946),[202] Muḥammad Jawād Balāghī al-Najafī (d.1352/1933),[203] Muḥammad Ṣādiq al-Mūsawī al-

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[187] Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, *Sharḥ Uṣūl al-Kāfī*, Tehran: Mutāli'āt wa Taḥqīqat-i Farhangī, 1366 AH (Solar)/1987, vol. 11, p. 378; Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, *al-Aṣfār*, Beirut: Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1987, vol. 7, pp. 22, 52; Hindī, *Iẓhār al-Ḥaqq*, p. 355.

[188] al-Fāḍil al-Tūnī, *al-Wāfiya fī Uṣūl al-Fiqh*, Qum: Majma' al-Fikr al-Islāmī, p. 148.

[189] al-Fayḍ al-Kāshānī, *al-Aṣfā*, Qum: al-'Alam al-Islāmī, 1418/1997, vol. 1, p. 626; al-Fayḍ al-Kāshānī, *al-Maḥajjah al-Bayḍā'*, Qum: Nashr-i Islāmī, vol. 2, p. 263.

[190] Bahā' al-Dīn al-Lāhijī, *Tafsīr Sharīf Lāhijī*, ed. Ḥusaynī Urmawī, Qum: Nashrdar, 1373 AH (Solar)/1994, vol. 2, pp. 658-659.

[191] Hindī, *Iẓhār al-Ḥaqq*, p. 355, 'Abd al-Ḥusayn Sharaf al-Dīn, *al-Fuṣūl al-Muhimmah fī Ta'līf al-A'immah*, Tehran: Farhang wa Irtibātāt-i Islāmī, 1417/1996, p. 244.

[192] Kāshānī, *al-Ṣāfī*, vol. 1, p. 51.

[193] Mīrzā Muḥammad al-Mashhadī, *Kanz al-Daqā'iq*, Tehran: Wizārat-i Farhang, 1411/1990, vol. 7, p. 104.

[194] Ja'far al-Mālikī (Kāshif al-Ghitā'), *Kashf al-Ghitā'*, Iṣfahān: Mahdawī, n.d., p. 299.

[195] Āshtīyānī, *Baḥr al-Fawā'id*, vol. 1, p. 99; Mīlānī, *al-Taḥqīq fī Nafy al-Taḥrīf*, pp. 25-26.

[196] Mīlānī, *al-Taḥqīq fī Nafy al-Taḥrīf*, p.26.

[197] Ibid.

[198] Ibid., p. 27

[199] Ma'rifat, *Ṣiyānah al-Qur'ān*, p. 69.

[200] Mīlānī, *al-Taḥqīq fī Nafy al-Taḥrīf*, p. 27.

[201] Āshtīyānī, *Baḥr al-Fawā'id*, vol. 1, p. 99.

[202] Muḥammad Jawād al-Āmulī, *Miftāḥ al-Karāmah*, Beirut: Fiqh al-Shi'a, 1418/1997, vol. 4, pp. 690-691.

[203] Balāghī, *Ālā' al-Raḥmān*, vol. 1, pp. 65-67.

Khwānsārī (14th/20th century),[204] Muḥammad Ḥusayn Kāshif al-Ghitā' (d. 1373/1953),[205] Muḥsin al-Amīn al-'Āmilī (d. ca. 1379/1959),[206] Muḥammad al-Nahāwandī (d. 1371/1951),[207] Mir Ja'far al-'Alawī al-Ḥusaynī (d. after 1379/1959),[208] and Sharaf al-Dīn al-'Āmilī (d. 1381/1961).[209]

In the 15th century we begin to see more extensive proliferation of material dealing with the immunity of the Qur'an from distortion; notable works in this regard are those of 'Allāmah al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī (d. 1402/1981),[210] Imām Khomeinī (d.1410/1989)[211] and Āyātullāh al-Khu'ī (d. 1413/1992)[212] and books dedicated to the topic such as: *Ṣiyānah al-Qur'ān min al-Taḥrīf* by Muḥammad Hādī Ma'rifat, *Ḥaqā'iq Hāmmah ḥawl al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* by Ja'far Murtaḍā al-'Āmilī, *al-Taḥqīq fī Nafyī al-Taḥrīf* by 'Alī al-Mīlānī, *Nazāhat-i Qur'ān az Taḥrīf* by Jawādī Āmulī, and *Tadwīn al-Qur'ān* by 'Alī al-Kurānī.

SOME ORIENTALIST ARGUMENTS REGARDING *TAḤRĪF*

Arguments that the Qur'an has been distorted in one way or another are not uncommon among orientalist researchers of the Qur'an. When a treasure trove of ancient 7th and 8th century Qur'anic manuscripts were uncovered in San'ā' in 1972, Gerd R. Puin was invited to be the local director involved in the restoration process. He commented that the script was based on a handwriting originating in the Hijāz. In his report Puin noted slight discrepancies in the content, the untraditional organization of the chapters and uncommon idiosyncrasies in the style

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[204] Muḥammad Ṣādiq al-Khwānsārī, *Ḍiyā' al-Tafāsīr*, Tehran: n.p., n.d., vol. 1, p. 465.

[205] Ja'far al-Mālikī (Kāshif al-Ghitā'), *Aṣl al-Shī'a wa Uṣūlihā*, ed. A. Alu Ja'far, Qum: Mu'assissih-yi Imām 'Alī, 1415/1994, p. 254.

[206] Muḥsin al-Amīn, *A'yān al-Shī'a*, ed. H. al-Amīn, Beirut: Dār al-Ta'āruf, n.d., vol. 1, p. 41.

[207] Muḥammad al-Nahāwandī, *Nafaḥāt al-Raḥmān* (lithograph), vol. 1, p. 14.

[208] Muḥammad Karīm al-Ḥusaynī, *Kashf al-Ḥaqā'iq*, trans. S. Nawbarī, Tehran: Mūsawī, 1339 AH (Solar)/1960, vol. 2, p. 80.

[209] Sharaf al-Dīn, *al-Fuṣūl al-Muhimmah*, pp. 241-246.

[210] Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *al-Mizān*, vol. 12, pp. 104-133.

[211] Rūḥollāh Khomeinī, *Anwār al-Hidāyah*, Qum: Nashr-i Āthār-i Imām, 1373 AH (Solar)/1994, pp. 242-247; Ja'far Subḥānī, *Tahdhīb al-Uṣūl*, Qum: Dār al-Fikr, 1410/1989, vol. 2, p. 165.

[212] al-Khu'ī, *al-Bayān*, pp. 197-235.

of writing. Furthermore he noted that some parchments were in fact palimpsests with a differing upper and lower writing.[213]

However it is inappropriate to conclude from these findings that the Qur'an has been distorted. Rather, we may emphasize that these slight discrepancies in the text, as noted by Puin, all fall in the sphere of recitation (*qirā'ah*) and the acceptable variations therein. As for the order of the chapters, this is according to most Muslim scholars based on independent reasoning (*ijtihād*)[214] and it does not fall under the category of *taḥrīf*.

Aside from this the majority of arguments presented by orientalists on the topic of *taḥrīf* are based on historical sources such as reports that speak about the compilation of the Qur'an by Zayd ibn Thābit during the caliphate of Abū Bakr,[215] and after that under the rule of 'Uthmān and the copies made from it,[216] and also the differences between the Companion codices with the present Qur'an;[217] additionally some doubts have been expressed regarding whether or not the disjointed letters (*ḥurūf al-muqaṭṭa'ah)* were intended as part of the Qur'anic text,[218] the permissibility of reciting based on synonymous terms or aberrant (*shādh*) recitations,[219] the apparent implication of *taḥrīf* in some narrations,[220] and finally the mention of the alleged chapters of the Qur'an *Nūrayn* and *Wilāyah*.[221]

For example Goldziher has suggested the possibility that the commentaries and the explanatory notes that were said to have been written in some codices or have been mentioned in some narrations, were in fact originally part of the Qur'an, only to have been separated

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[213] Puin, Gerd R., 'Observations on Early Qur'an Manuscripts in Ṣan'ā', in *The Qur'an as Text*, ed. Stefan Wild, Leiden: Brill, 1996, pp. 107-111. al-Islāmī, 1416/1995, vol. 1, pp. 433-460.

[214] Markaz al-Thaqāfah wa al-Ma'ārif, *'Ulūm al-Qur'ān 'inda al-Mufassirīn*, Qum: al-I'lām.

[215] Riḍwān, *Ārā' al-Mustashriqīn*, vol. 1, pp. 461-463.

[216] Ibid., vol. 1, p. 477.

[217] Muḥammad 'Izzah Darwāzah, *Tārīkh al-Qur'ān*, Tehran: Nashr-i Inqilab, 1410/1989, pp. 259-278; Goldziher, *Madhāhib al-Tafsīr al-Islāmī*, pp. 20-31.

[218] Goldziher, *Madhāhib al-Tafsīr al-Islāmī*, pp. 38.

[219] Inayah, *Shubuhāt ḥawl al-Qur'ān*, pp. 56-57; Riḍwān, *Ārā' al-Mustashriqīn*, vol. 2, pp. 537-539.

[220] Inayah, *Shubuhāt ḥawl al-Qur'ān*, pp. 46-47; Goldziher, *Madhāhib al-Tafsīr al-Islāmī*, p. 306.

[221] Goldziher, *Madhāhib al-Tafsīr al-Islāmī*, pp. 294-295.

from it later on.[222] Others have incorrectly interpreted some narrations to indicate that parts of the present Qur'an were in reality words of one Companion or another, which were then added to the Qur'an; for example the following verse:

وَٱتَّخِذُواْ مِن مَّقَامِ إِبْرَٰهِـۧمَ مُصَلًّى

...Take the venue of prayer from Abraham's Station... (2:125) [223]

These words were said to have been initially spoken by 'Umar to the Holy Prophet (s) who then added them to the Qur'an. Other such instances have also been attributed to 'Umar.[224] Examining the extant narrations[225] carefully we notice that they are in fact in contradiction to the Qur'an itself, which on several occasions - such as verses 38-47 of *Sūrat al-Haqqah* states that the Qur'an has been revealed by Allāh (swt), and also very clearly and strictly condemns and rejects any sort of addition or distortion to it by the Holy Prophet (s).

THE ROOT OF THE DISCUSSION

Despite what was said above, clearly we cannot reject arguments regarding the textual corruption of the Qur'an by quoting verses from the book itself. To get to the root of any doubt and suspicion about the perseverance of the Qur'an we must go to the narrations themselves. These narrations then need to be analysed seriously, and hopefully, concisely.

1. The difficult nature of the traditions

The possibility of fabrication, the infiltration of extremist viewpoints, *Isrā'īlīyyāt*,[226] *taqṭī'*,[227] paraphrasing of narrations, forgetfulness of a

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[222] Ibid., pp. 20-28.

[223] Qur'anic translations are those of 'Alī Quli Qara'i.

[224] Riḍwān, *Ārā' al-Mustashriqīn*, vol. 2, p. 642.

[225] al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-Manthūr*, vol. 1, p. 290.

[226] [Editor's note: *Isrā'īlīyyāt* refers to narrations that find their origin in a Jewish background, which may or may not be based on Jewish scriptures such as the Torah. In Qur'anic exegesis these stories often fill in gaps of the Qur'anic narrative with additional detail. Many early and contemporary scholars have frowned upon the usage and transmission of these narrations.]

[227] [Editor's note: *taqṭī'* refers to narrations that only trace their chain of transmission to a Follower, or *tābi'ī*]

transmitter and many other factors, make the task of examining narrations an extremely delicate one.[228]

Thus one cannot simply refer to a narration without serious and critical consideration.

Furthermore, it is only natural that we hold any and all narrations that speak of the wording or text of the Qur'an to the highest standard, and not only demand authenticity of the chain of narrators, but indeed that its wording be multiply attested (*tawātur lafẓī*), its implication be clear and its meaning explicit; one simply cannot conclude anything about the wording and recitation of the Qur'an based on isolated narrations (*khabar wāḥid*),[229] not to mention - using them to establish the corruption of the Qur'anic text.

2. The Qur'anic structure and style

The Qur'an has a unique structure and style that is unlike any other work, and this uniqueness may from time to time give rise to certain doubts and assumptions. For example consider the following verse:

وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تُقْسِطُوا فِي الْيَتَامَىٰ فَانْكِحُوا مَا طَابَ لَكُم مِّنَ النِّسَاءِ

If you fear that you may not deal justly with the orphans, then marry [other] women that you like... (4:3)

The first part of this verse speaks about acting justly towards orphans, while the second part is about marrying righteous women. As the two topics are seemingly unrelated it is not surprising that a narration exists, which alleges that a third of the Qur'an was lost from in between these two phrases.[230]

However, considering the fact that during the days of ignorance it was not uncommon for orphan girls to be mistreated and their property or wealth misappropriated,[231] we notice a clear connection between these two topics. This connection is further supported by verse 127 of the same chapter.[232] Despite this, some have argued that a third of the Qur'an has

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[228] 'Abd Allāh Jawādī Āmulī, *Tasnīm*, Qum: Isrā', 1378 AH (Solar)/1999, vol. 1, pp. 83-86; Maḥmūd Abū Rayyāḥ, *Aḍwā' 'alā al-Sunna al-Muḥammadiyyah*, Qum: Nashr al-Ba'tha, n.d., pp. 99-118.

[229] Ibn Nu'mān, *al-Masā'il al-Sirrawwiyyah*, p. 78.

[230] Nūrī, *Faṣl al-Khiṭāb*, p. 248; Goldziher, *Madhāhib al-Tafsīr al-Islāmī*, p. 311.

[231] Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *al-Mizān*, vol. 4, p. 166.

[232] That verse reads: *"They seek your ruling concerning women. Say, 'Allāh gives you a ruling concerning them and what is announced to you in the Book concerning girl orphans whom you do not give what has been prescribed for them, and yet you*

been lost from in between these two sentences. To prove their argument they make reference to a *mursal* narration,[233] which has been mentioned in only one original source.[234]

Also appropriate for discussion here is the alleged verses that used to exist in the Qur'an, but the recitation of which is said to have been abrogated[235] such as the tradition which states that Ubay ibn Ka'b used to recite *law anna ibn Ādama sa'ala wādiyan...* as a part of *Sūrat al-Bayyinah*,[236] and other similar narrations that can be found in al-Suyūṭī's *al-Itqān*,[237] or elsewhere. However, inconsistencies in the text, its unsuitability with the Qur'anic style, and even mistakes present in it,[238] mark this and similar 'verses' as something separate from the Qur'an.

3. The habit of Companions to write commentary alongside the text of the Qur'an.

Evidence shows that some of the Companions used to write commentaries and notes alongside their personal codices, without distinguishing them from the main text[239] and therefore, if we find in some narrations that in the Qur'an of Ibn Mas'ūd or Ubay ibn Ka'b or some other Companion, there were slight additions to this or that verse, which are not present in the other copies of the Qur'an,[240] then it is prudent to assume that these are in fact commentaries which they have written themselves and not actual verses of the Qur'an. The statement of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb "Do not add anything to the Qur'an" (*jarridu'l-Qur'ān*) appears to have been made in this context.[241]

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desire to marry them and about the weak among children: that you should maintain the orphans with justice, and whatever good you do, indeed Allāh knows it well."

[233] [Translator's note: a *mursal* narration has at least one missing link in its chain.]

[234] al-Faḍl ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṭabrisī, *al-Iḥtijāj*, Tehran: Uswah, 1416/1995, vol. 1, pp. 377-378.

[235] Ibn Ḥazm, *al-Muḥallā*, vol. 11, p. 235; Abū Shāmah, *al-Murshid al-Wajīz*, p. 42.

[236] Nayshābūrī, *al-Mustadrak*, vol. 2, p. 531; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, vol. 2, p. 53.

[237] al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, vol. 2, pp. 46-47.

[238] Balāghī, *Ālā' al-Raḥmān*, vol. 1, pp. 54-60.

[239] al-Zarkashī, *al-Burhān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, vol. 1, pp. 235-238; ibn al-Jazarī, *al-Nashr fī al-Qirā'at al-'Ashr*, vol. 1, pp. 22-23.

[240] E.g. al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-Manthūr*, vol. 2, p. 340.

[241] Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Umam wa al-Mulūk*, Beirut: A'lāmi, 1407/1986, vol. 4, p. 273; Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī, *Tadhkirah al-Ḥuffāẓ*, Beirut: Dār al-Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, vol. 1, p. 7.

4. Certain expressions

A good deal of doubt and confusion is caused by the traditions that apparently allude to the distortion of the Qur'an by using terms such as "we used to recite (*nuqri'u*) like this", or "the verse was revealed (*tanzīluhu*) this way", or "the verse has been revealed (*nazalat*) like this", and "they have distorted (*ḥarrafu*) the book of God." However these terms are used in a very specific sense in the traditions. Examining the sources it becomes apparent that the Companions, Successors and the Imams (a) were more prone to use the above expressions when discussing the Qur'an rather than terms such as *tafsīr* or *ma'nā*.

Qirā'ah: Even though this word is used mainly to refer to the recitation of the words of the Qur'an, in the traditions it is not limited to this meaning only and can also refer to the interpretation (*ta'wīl*) or exegesis (*tafsīr*) of the Qur'an.[242]

Shaykh al-Mufīd says concerning this: "Sometimes the *ta'wīl* of the Qur'an is referred to as 'Qur'an', and the exegetes are agreed upon this point."[243]

Iqra', which is the verbal noun of *aqra'a*, is mainly used to mean teaching recitation, but can mean teaching more than just the wording of the Qur'anic text.[244] Murtaḍā al-'Askarī argues that up to the era of the Successors, *iqra'* was used to indicate the teaching of the letters and words of the Qur'an, alongside the teaching of the knowledge and meaning of those words.[245]

Therefore we find that it has been narrated in some traditions that the *Ahl al-Bayt* or Ibn Mas'ūd used to recite the verse:

إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ ٱصْطَفَىٰٓ ءَادَمَ وَنُوحًا وَءَالَ إِبْرَٰهِيمَ وَءَالَ عِمْرَٰنَ عَلَى ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ

Indeed Allah chose Adam and Noah, and the progeny of Abraham and the progeny of 'Imrān above all of the nations (3:33)

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[242] Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmi' li-Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, vol. 1, p. 86.
[243] Ibn Nu'mān, *Awā'il al-Maqālāt*, p. 81.
[244] Ibrāhīm Anīs, *al-Mu'jam al-Wasīṭ*, Tehran: Farhang-i Islāmī, 1375 AH (Solar)/1996, p. 722, s.v. *q-r-'*.
[245] 'Askarī, *al-Qur'ān wa Riwāyah al-Madrasatayn*, vol. 1, p. 296.

and add "and the progeny of Muḥammad" (*Āl Muḥammad*)[246] after *Āl 'Imrān*. However, this recitation is merely commentary on the verse, expounding upon the concept of the progeny of Abraham.

This understanding is lent credence by the group of traditions which explain the family of Ibrāhīm (a) to be the *Ahl al-Bayt*[247] and another tradition from Ibn Mas'ūd that adds a phrase to verse 67 of *Sūrat al-Mā'idah "O Apostle! Communicate that which has been sent down to you from your Lord* – that 'Alī is the master (*mawlā*) of the believers - *and if you do not, then you will not have communicated His message."* He then comments that "this is how we were reciting (*nuqri'u*) the verse during the time of the Messenger of Allāh."[248]

It seems then that what 'Abd Allāh Ibn Mas'ūd meant by saying 'we used to recite the verse like this', is referring to the teaching of recitation of the Qur'an, along with an explanation of the meaning to facilitate correct understanding, and the added phrase was not meant as part of the Qur'anic text.

Tanzīl: This word comes from the root *n-z-l*, which means to come down or descend;[249] in the context of narrations it has the same linguistic meaning as the coming down or revelation of the Qur'an (*waḥy-i Qur'ānī*) and the revelation of its meaning (*waḥy-i tafsīrī*). Thus many narrations that speak about a verse being revealed in such and such a way describe the meaning and commentary of the Qur'an, rather than its actual text.[250]

Taḥrīf: This term in most of the traditions - that number approximately twenty– either refers to an alteration in the recitation of the verses, or a distortion in the meaning of the verses, and is equal to engaging in commentary based on one's personal opinion (*al-tafsīr bil-ra'y*);[251] neither of these two meanings are related to textual distortion of the Qur'an. For example on the day of 'Āshūra, Imām Ḥusayn (a) berated the army of Yazīd as having distorted the Qur'an. Imām al-Ṣādiq (a) also

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[246] al-Ṭabrisī, *Majma' al-Bayān*, vol. 2, p. 278; al-Ḥākim al-Ḥaskānī, *Shawāhid al-Tanzīl*, Tehran: Vizārati-i Farhang, 1411/1990, vol. 1, p. 152; 'Ādil al-Ka'bī, *Ahl al-Bayt fī Tafsīr al-Tha'labī*, Qum: Dalil, 1381 AH (Solar)/2002, p. 46.

[247] Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn Bābawayh Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn Bābawayh (Shaykh Ṣadūq), 'Uyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā, Beirut: A'lāmi, 1404/1983, vol. 2, p. 199; idem, *al-Amālī*, Qum: al-Bi'tha, 1417/1996, pp. 221-222.

[248] al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-Manthūr*, vol. 2, p. 298.

[249] Anīs, *al-Mu'jam al-Wasīṭ*, p. 915, s.v. *n-z-l*.

[250] Najjarzadegan, *Salāmah al-Qur'ān min al-Taḥrīf*, p. 59.

[251] Abū Ja'far al-Ṭūsī, *Ikhtiyār Ma'rifah al-Rijāl*, Mashhad: Dānishgāh-i Mashhad, 1348 AH (Solar)/1969, p. 4; al-Khu'ī, *al-Bayān*, pp. 226- 229.

castigated the grammarians saying "the Arab linguists (*Aṣḥāb al-'arabiyyah*) *have distorted words from their* (proper) *meaning* (5:13)."[252] In this tradition what is meant by distortion is that independent reasoning (*ijtihād*) was used to alter the pronunciation of words and the way the verses were recited.

Again we find support for this concept in a tradition from Imām al-Bāqir (a) where he says: "Also one of the ways that they neglected the Book of God, was that they abided by its wording, but altered its meaning (*aqāmū ḥurufahu wa ḥarrafū ḥudūdahu*)."[253] The lexicographer al-Layth ibn al-Muẓaffar has also understood the *taḥrīf* of the Qur'an to be alteration in its meaning.[254]

Apart from the aforementioned narrations, there exist other traditions in Shi'i collections in which the apparent meaning seems to refer to the elimination of some words or sentences from the Qur'anic text. These can be categorized into the following:

a. Traditions which clearly show the eliminated portion is an explanation and commentary of a verse; like the tradition narrated by Kulaynī that Imām 'Alī (a) recited the following verse:

وَإِذَا تَوَلَّىٰ سَعَىٰ فِي ٱلْأَرْضِ لِيُفْسِدَ فِيهَا وَيُهْلِكَ ٱلْحَرْثَ وَٱلنَّسْلَ

"And if he were to wield authority, he would try to cause corruption in the land, and to ruin the crop and the stock" (2:205) and added "with his vileness and evil-intent."[255]

Here then the Imām identifies the tyrant's wickedness as the main reason for the destruction of lives and property.

b. Traditions which attempt to explain the most important instance (*miṣdāq*) of a given verse; like the *maqṭū'* narration of *al-Kāfī* in which a man recited the following verse in the presence of Imām al-Ṣādiq (a):

وَقُلِ ٱعْمَلُوا۟ فَسَيَرَى ٱللَّهُ عَمَلَكُمْ وَرَسُولُهُۥ وَٱلْمُؤْمِنُونَ

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[252] Ḥusayn al-Nūrī, *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il* (Beirut: Al al-Bayt li Iḥyā' al-Turāth, 1408 AH), vol. 4, p. 280, 'Alī Namāzī Shāhrūdī, *Mustadrak Ṣāfīnah al-Biḥār*, ed. H. Namāzī, Qum, Nashr-i Islāmī, n.d., vol. 7, p. 139.

[253] Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 8, p. 54.

[254] Abū Manṣūr al-Azharī, *Tahdhib al-Lughah*, n.p.: al-Dār al-Misriyyah, n.d., vol. 5, p. 14. [Editor's note : al-Layth was a student of the famous 2nd/8th century scholar al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad al-Farahidi, the author of *Kitāb al-'Ayn*, which al-Layth transmitted from him.]

[255] Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 8, p. 289. In Arabic: *bi-zulmihi wa su'i sariratihi.*

> And say: Go on working: Allah will see your conduct, and His Apostle and the faithful (9:105)

The Imām then commented "It is not like this, rather it is like so: 'and the safeguarded ones' (*wa al-mā'minūn*), and we are the safeguarded ones."[256]

What this tradition is intending to say is that the general believers are not being referred to here, but rather what is meant by believers are the perfect believers who have been safeguarded, and that is no one but the infallibles.[257]

c. Traditions which talk about the quantitative aspects of the Qur'an; like the tradition narrated by Kulaynī from Imām al-Ṣādiq (a) that the Qur'an has 17,000 verses.[258]

With regards to this tradition it needs to be noted that firstly, in some reliable manuscripts of *al-Kāfī*, this tradition has been recorded as 7000, an estimate that is approximately in-line with the actual number of verses in the Qur'an.[259]

Secondly, the excess to the present number of verses, based on contextual evidence, may be considered as non-Qur'anic revelations.[260]

Even if we are not convinced by these possibilities, we cannot accept the content of this tradition at face value, because the narrations found in Shi'i sources do not speak about the deletion or addition of complete verses of the Qur'an, rather when talking about the distortion of a verse, the narrations speak of a word or a phrase being changed or lost, which may be understood as commentary and interpretation.

d. Traditions which talk about the name of the infallibles in the Qur'an, like the narration of *al-Kāfī* which asserts that the mastership (*wilāyah*) of 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (a) has been mentioned in all of the previous heavenly scriptures, and that God did not appoint any Prophet except that He informed him regarding the Prophethood of Muḥammad and the identity of his successor.[261]

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[256] Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, p. 424.

[257] Majlisī, *Mir'āt al-'Uqūl*, vol. 5, p. 79.

[258] Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 2, p. 634.

[259] al-Fayḍ al-Kāshānī, *al-Wāfī*, Iṣfahān: Maktabah al-Imām Amīr al-Mu'minīn, 1406/1985, vol. 9, p. 1780.

[260] Ṣadūq, *al-I'tiqādāt*, pp. 84-85.

[261] Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, p. 437. Similar traditions have also been related in Sunni sources. For example in one Ibn Mas'ūd narrates that the Prophet (s) said to him: 'O 'Abd Allāh! The angel of revelation came to me and recited (this verse): *"Ask those of Our apostles We have sent before you* (43:45), why have they

In another tradition from Imām al-Ṣādiq (a) he is reported to have said: "If the Qur'an was recited the same way that it was revealed, then you would have found our name in it."[262] A similar tradition has also been narrated from Imām al-Bāqir (a).[263] It is good to note that this tradition does not say 'if the Qur'an had not been distorted then you would have found our name in it' or 'our name had previously been in the Qur'an but was lost due to distortion.'

Paying attention to the terms and concepts such as *tanzīl* (revelation), *iqrā'* (recitation), *jārī* (flow) and *taṭbīq* (conformity), the occasion of revelation, and the instances referred to in the verses, we may note that the purpose of these traditions has been to outline the characteristics and attributes of the *Ahl al-Bayt in* the Qur'an – and sometimes in previous scriptures – and if there has been any explicit mention of their names, it has been for the purposes of commentary, elucidating that which the previous messengers had explained to their nations.[264]

To sum up, the traditions from both schools of thought in this area are subject to *ta'wīl*.[265] This is supported by traditions which clearly state that the names of the Imams have not been explicitly mentioned in the Qur'an, but rather the Qur'an mentions them by describing their attributes.[266] Also historically Imām 'Alī (a), the Imams and their companions used to make reference to the prophetic traditions to prove their divine leadership, which indicates the lack of clear evidence for their names being mentioned in the Qur'an.[267]

In conclusion, we may remark that even if we assume that the mentioned traditions were uttered by the Imams, they are arguably explication of one possible instance to which a verse may refer, the

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been appointed as messengers?" I then asked about the reason for their appointment. He said: "For (announcing) your mastership and the mastership of 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib." Ḥaskānī, *Shawāhid al-Tanzīl*, vol. 2, p. 222-223; 'Alī ibn al-Ḥasan ibn 'Āsākir, *Tārīkh Madīnah al-Dimashq*, ed. 'A. Shiri, Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1415/1994, vol. 2, p. 97.

[262] Muḥammad ibn Mas''ūd al-'Ayyāshī, *Tafsīr al-'Ayyāshī*, ed. R. Maḥallātī, Tehran: al-Maktabah al-'Ilmiyyah al-Islāmiyyah, vol. 1, p. 13.

[263] Ibid.

[264] Goldziher, *Madhāhib al-Tafsīr al-Islāmī*, pp. 312-336.

[265] See for example Ibn 'Āsākir, *Tārīkh al-Dimashq*, vol. 2, pp. 428-431; Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr*, vol. 9, p. 211; Abū Na'īm al-Iṣfahānī, *Hilyah al-Awliyā'*, ed. M. 'Abd al-Qādir, Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Ilmiyyah, 1418/1997, vol. 1, p. 103.

[266] Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, p. 286; al-Khu'ī, *al-Bayān*, p. 231.

[267] Khomeinī, *Anwār al-Hidāyah*, pp. 243-247.

occasion regarding which a verse was revealed (*sha'n al-nuzūl*), a specific recitation, non-Qur'anic revelation, or *ta'wīl*, or...

THE ALLEGED CHAPTERS OF *NŪRAYN* AND *WILĀYAH*

Some people have claimed that Shi'i compilations speak about two additional chapters of the Qur'an called *Nūrayn* (the Two Lights) and *Wilāyah* (Mastership), which the Shi'a believe to have been or to be part of the Qur'an. These chapters were then later removed from the 'Uthmānic compilation, because they mention the virtues of Imām 'Alī (a).[268]

These chapters have been referred to by some polemicists as well to claim that the Shi'a have another hidden Qur'an.[269] This claim has also been discussed in orientalist works, however research shows that there has been no mention of these two chapters in Shi'i or Sunni sources earlier than the 11th/17th century.[270]

These two chapters seem to have been fabricated in India by a group of unknown people and then found their way to different places. The earliest source discussing the chapter *Nūrayn* is in the book *Dabistān-i Madhahib*[271] whose author only heard about the chapter verbally from an unknown group.[272]

As for the alleged chapter of *Wilāyah*, some claim that Ibn Shahrāshūb in his book *al-Mathālib*, had maintained that the chapter had been a part of the original Qur'an,[273] but there is no evidence of this in any known manuscript of the book. Furthermore, Ibn Shahrāshūb, like Sayyid Murtaḍā, explicitly declared that the Qur'an had not been distorted.[274]

Based on the opinion of orientalists the chapter of *Nūrayn* was found in a handwritten copy of the Qur'an written in the 10th/16th century or 11th/17th century. It was found in 1912 in Bankipore, Bengal and there is a high possibility – based on the dating of the manuscript – that it has

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[268] Darwāzah, *Tārīkh al-Qur'ān*, p. 28; Ma'rifat, *Ṣiyānah al-Qur'ān*, p. 214; Mawbid Kaykhusraw Isfandiyār, *Dabistān-i Madhāhib*, Tehran: Kitābkhānih-yi Tahūrī, 1362 AH (Solar)/1983, pp. 246-247.

[269] Ghaffārī, *Uṣūl Madhhab al-Shī'a*, vol. 1, p. 257.

[270] Goldziher, *Madhāhib al-Tafsīr al-Islāmī*, pp. 294-295; Nöldeke, Theodor, *Geschichte Des Qorans*, New York: George Olms Verag, 1981, pp. 111, 231-234.

[271] Nūrī, *Faṣl al-Khiṭāb*, p. 157.

[272] Isfandiyār, *Dabistān-i Madhāhib*, vol. 1, pp. 244, 247.

[273] al-Ālūsī, *Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī*, vol. 1, p. 44; Nūrī, *Faṣl al-Khiṭāb*, p. 157.

[274] Ibn Shahrāshūb, *Mutashābih, al-Qur'ān wa Mukhtalifah*, vol. 2, p. 77; Najjarzadegan, *Salāmah al-Qur'ān min al-Taḥrīf*, pp.398-399.

been taken from the book *Dabistān-i Madhāhib*.[275] The only source referring to these two chapters in Shi'i books is a book called *Tadhkirah al-A'immah* from Muḥammad Bāqir ibn Muḥammad al-Taqī al-Lāhījī, which discusses Sūfī practices.[276] He mentions these two chapters without making a reference to their source,[277] probably having taken them from the aforementioned unknown copy of the Qur'an.

EVIDENCE FOR THE IMMUNITY OF THE QUR'AN FROM DISTORTION

When arguing about the lack of any possibility of distortion, Muslim commentators have mentioned different proofs, some of which we will now briefly examine.

Qur'anic verses

The verse of protection

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا ٱلذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَٰفِظُونَ

> Indeed We have sent down the Reminder, and indeed We will preserve it. (15:9)

The verse begins with a dual emphasis (*innā* and *naḥnu*) that God is the One who has revealed the Qur'an without any outside interference. He also emphasizes the majesty of the Qur'an and how it is protected from any kind of alteration or distortion.

The verse of rejection of falsehood

لاَ يَأْتِيهِ الْبَاطِلُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَلاَ مِنْ خَلْفِهِ تَنزِيلٌ مِنْ حَكِيمٍ حَمِيدٍ

> ...Indeed it is an august Book * Falsehood cannot approach it, from before it nor from behind it, a [gradually] sent down [revelation] from One All-Wise, All-Laudable. (41:42)

'Book' in this verse refers to the Holy Qur'an. Being 'august' (*'azīz*), and being so that 'falsehood cannot approach it', and being 'sent down from One All-Wise, All-Laudable' each in itself is a negation of the possibility of distortion of the Qur'an.

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[275] Ibid., p. 229.

[276] Amīn, *A'yān al-Shī'a*, vol. 9, p. 185; Muḥammad Muḥsin al-Tihrānī, *al-Dharī'ah ilā Taṣānīf al-Shī'a*, Beirut: Dār al-Aḍwā', 1403/1982, vol. 4, p. 26.

[277] Muḥammad Bāqir al-Lāhījī, *Tadhkirah al-A'immah*, Tehran: n.p., 1392/1972, pp. 19-20.

The word *'azīz* means something powerful that cannot be broken or penetrated, in other words distortion cannot creep into it.[278] The term *bāṭil* (falsehood) refers to the opposite of truth (*ḥaqq*) and is something unstable that is receptive to distortion and corruption.[279] Hence by rejecting falsehood, the Qur'an also rejects any type of alteration to it, because any type of distortion would by its nature damage the content and consistency of the Qur'an. Furthermore, by mentioning 'from before it nor from behind it' the verse rejects any type of distortion having taken place in the past nor that any will occur in the future.

Finally, the last sentence of this verse mentions that the Qur'an has been revealed by 'One All-Wise, All-Laudable', and it would be contrary to the actions of a wise agent to allow His message to become distorted in any way.

Verses rejecting doubt and other similar things

Verses such as 2:2[280] and 32:2[281] have been referred to by Muslim scholars to reject any kind of distortion of the Qur'an.[282] These verses have also served as instruments for those repudiating the claims that the Qur'an is only kept safe (*maḥfūẓ*) in the heart of the Holy Prophet (s),[283] or that only one single authentic copy of the Qur'an remains with the Imām, and nowhere else.[284] This is because to serve its purpose of guidance the Qur'an needs to be kept preserved and protected among the people. Having a distorted Qur'an among the people, but a complete copy with the Imām would obviously not serve this purpose. On the other hand if a distorted Qur'an could still serve its purpose of guidance, then there would be no need for God's promise to protect the Qur'an in the heart of the Holy Prophet (s).

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[278] Iṣfahānī, *Mufradāt*, p. 263, s.v. *'a-z-z.*

[279] Ibid., p. 129, entry *b-ṭ-l.*

[280] *"This is the Book, there is no doubt in it..."*

[281] *"The [gradual] sending down of the Book, there is no doubt in it, is from the of Lord of all the worlds."*

[282] Najjarzadegan, *Salāmah al-Qur'ān min al-Taḥrīf*, pp. 25, 26.

[283] Nūrī, *Faṣl al-Khiṭāb*, p. 348.

[284] Ibid.

Traditions

Traditions explaining the characteristics of the Qur'an

In some narrations, such as parts of Fāṭima al-Zahrā's (a) speech regarding Fadak or some of Imām 'Alī's (a) letters and sermons, the Qur'an has been described as being immune to alteration.[285] For example, in his letter to Mālik al-Ashtar,[286] Imām 'Alī (a) says that verse 4:59[287] clearly and unequivocally demands that disputes be referred to the Book of God, indicating that it is inherently accurate and free from any corruption. Parts of the supplications found in *al-Ṣaḥīfah al-Sajjādiyyah* explaining the attributes of the Qur'an also mention the protection and perseverance of the Book.[288] Of course, scholars point to many other traditions in this regard as well.[289]

Traditions about juxtaposing *ḥadīth* with Qur'an

The narrations (which may be traced back to the Prophet)[290] regarding juxtaposing any *aḥādīth* with the Qur'an[291] – which may be considered to be a multiply attested concept, or *mutawātir mā'nawī* (of indubitable purport as a collective)[292] – are the strongest proof for the immunity of the Qur'an from textual corruption. These narrations say that the Qur'an should be the yardstick against which the validity of narrations must be checked. Explicitly, they indicate the supreme authority of the Qur'an and its ascendancy over the body of narrated traditions; implicitly they indicate that the Qur'an's text is reliable and free from *taḥrīf*. If *taḥrīf* had occurred in the Qur'an it would serve no purpose as a yardstick against which things must be measured. Clearly, the advice to juxtapose

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[285] Raḍī, *Nahj al-Balāghah,* sermons 183, 198.
[286] Ibid., letter 53.
[287] *"O you who have faith! Obey Allāh and obey the Apostle and those vested with authority among you. And if you dispute concerning anything, refer it to Allāh and the Apostle, if you have faith in Allāh and the Last Day. That is better and more favourable in outcome."*
[288] *al-Ṣaḥīfah al-Sajjādiyyah,* supplication 42.
[289] Najjarzadegan, *Salāmah al-Qur'ān min al-Taḥrīf,* pp. 27-33.
[290] al-Ḥurr al-'Āmilī, *Wasā'il al-Shī'a,* Qum: Al al-Bayt li Iḥyā' al-Turāth, 1414/1993, vol. 27, pp. 109-111.
[291] Ibid; 'Ayyāshī, *Tafsīr al-'Ayyāshī,* vol. 2, p. 115; Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī,* vol. 1, pp. 69, 112.
[292] Murtaḍā al-Anṣārī, *Farā'id al-Uṣūl,* Qum: Majma' al-Fikr al-Islāmī, 1419/1998, vol. 1, p. 244.

narrations with the Qur'an can only be done with the existing text of the Qur'an.

Muḥaddith al-Nūrī acknowledges that the narrations concerning juxtaposing are *mutawātir*, but also argues that the Qur'an has undergone *taḥrīf*, saying that there is no contradiction between these two facts, since that which has been lost from the Qur'an does not affect it being a yardstick, and even though the Qur'an has been distorted by having some of its text being lost, what is left of it can still be used to measure the validity of narrations. Furthermore, he insists that the advice to juxtapose narrations to the Qur'an is only meant to be done in relation to the legal verses of the Qur'an (*āyāt al-aḥkām*).[293]

However we must note that the narrations have spoken unconditionally about the Qur'an as being the yardstick, and have not limited the concept in any way, and there seems to be no reason to limit the narrations as only speaking about the legal verses of the Qur'an.

The *ḥadīth* of *thaqalayn*

The tradition of *thaqalayn*[294] is another *mutawātir* narration that indicates a lack of textual corruption. It does so in two ways: firstly, it highlights the importance and necessity of holding fast to the Qur'an at all times, and any belief in distortion would render such dedication fruitless; secondly, the belief in distortion negates the probative validity and authority of the Qur'an and makes it impossible to use it as a yardstick. The reason for this is assuming that sections of a text have either been deleted or changed, would make it impossible to arrive at a solid understanding of that text and consequently use it in arguments, because it is possible that the changed or deleted section may have been the key to understanding the authentic sections that remain.[295]

Traditions narrated on the virtues of reciting the Qur'an

There are many narrations outlining the reward of reciting the whole Qur'an, or indeed those that prohibit reciting the whole Qur'an in one night or less than three days and so on; all of these narrations would be

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[293] Nūrī, *Faṣl al-Khiṭāb*, p. 351.

[294] [Editor's note: this tradition is a famous one in which the Prophet (s) says that he is leaving behind him two weighty things (*thaqalayn*): the Book of God and his progeny, the *Ahl al-Bayt*, and if people hold fast to these two things they will not be led astray.]

[295] al-Khu'ī, *al-Bayān*, pp. 211-214.

meaningless if we did not have access to the complete Qur'an.[296] Assuming the Qur'an has been distorted, compliance to this ruling becomes not only difficult but rather impossible.

Traditions that confirm the lack of distortion

According to the previously mentioned authentic narration that Imām al-Bāqir (a) wrote in a letter to Sa'd al-Khayr that "And also one of the ways that they neglected the Book of God, was that they abided by its wording, but altered its meaning,"[297] which of course suggests that the wording itself had not been tampered with.

Ḥusayn ibn 'Uthmān narrates from Imām al-Ṣādiq (a): "What is contained between the two covers (*bayn al-daffatayn*) is the Qur'an."[298]

It has also been reportedly mentioned in a letter by Imām Ḥasan al-'Askarī (a) to the people that "The Muslim nation unanimously agrees that the Qur'an is the truth and there is no doubt in it, and it is truthful in having this opinion."[299] This tradition is rather clear in mentioning the protection of the Qur'an from distortion. Other traditions can also be found in this area, which alleviate doubts regarding the distortion of the Qur'an.[300]

Historical evidence

The great deal of attention that Muslims have paid to the compilation, memorisation, recording and writing of the Qur'an, and the sacredness with which they have viewed this Book from the time of its revelation, need to be taken into account when considering the possibility of textual corruption. Based on historical evidence, Muslims have been very sensitive to even the most minute alterations and adjustments being made to the Qur'an, and react swiftly and critically to any such event. This in itself speaks volumes about the misconception of *taḥrīf*.

For instance, according to a narration, 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān assumed that there was no '*wa*' in the phrase "...and those (*wa alladhīna*) who treasure up gold and silver" in verse 9:34 of the Holy Qur'an, but Ubay ibn Ka'b warned the caliph that if the *wa* was not included in the codex,

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[296] Ṣadūq, *al-I'tiqādāt*, p. 84.
[297] Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 8, p. 53.
[298] Anon. (ed.), *al-Uṣūl al-Sittah 'Ashar*, Qum: Dār al-Shabistarī, 1405/1984, p. 111.
[299] Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 2, p. 225, vol. 5, p. 68.
[300] Ibn al-Jazarī, *al-Nashr*, pp. 4-13.

he would draw his blade from its scabbard.[301] In another incident the second caliph was of the opinion that in the recitation of verse 100 of *Sūrat al-Tawbah*, the term '*anṣār*' was to be recited in the nominative (*marfū'*, i.e. *al-anṣāru*) and that there was no *wa* in the beginning of *'alladhīna'*. In both cases the meanings would have changed significantly; in the first to reflect poorly on the Jews, and in the second to demote the status of the *anṣār* to those who followed the *muhājirūn*. In the latter case Ubay and some other companions once again objected and complained to 'Umar that the verse was not to be recited as he had claimed.[302]

It is also famously narrated that 'Umar believed that there had been a verse in the Qur'an specifying the punishment of stoning, but he was afraid of announcing this as the people would accuse him of adding to the Book of God.[303]

It has also been narrated from 'Abd Allāh ibn Zubayr that he asked 'Uthmān as to why he does not remove verse 2:240, as its ruling had been abrogated, to which the caliph replied that he would never change anything in the Qur'an or remove anything from it.[304]

The keen attention paid by the Companions to the Qur'an is strong evidence as to the faithful compilation and preservation of the Qur'an after the demise of the Holy Prophet (s).[305]

Among the Shi'i scholars the earliest scholar on record to have argued this is Sharīf al-Murtaḍā,[306] an idea accepted later by other scholars as well.[307]

Rational evidence

Muslim scholars have also put forward rational arguments, based on an Islamic theology and worldview, as to why the Qur'an could not have been distorted. A simple line of reasoning may be summarized in the following key points:

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[301] al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-Manthūr*, vol. 3, p. 419.
[302] Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān*, vol. 11, p. 13; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-Manthūr*, vol. 3, p. 483.
[303] al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-Manthūr*, vol. 5, p. 179.
[304] al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 4, pp. 160-161.
[305] Ibn Qutaybah, *Ta'wīl Mushkil al-Qur'ān*, p. 42; Qurṭubī, *Jāmi' li-Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, vol. 1, p. 80.
[306] Murtaḍā, *al-Dhakhīrah*, pp. 361-364.
[307] Nabātī, *al-Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm*, vol. 1, p. 45; Subḥānī, *Tahdhīb al-Uṣūl*, vol. 2, p. 165.

a. God, who is Wise, revealed the Qur'an for the guidance of mankind.

b. The Qur'an is the final book of God, and the Holy Prophet (s)) is the last and final messenger of God.

c. If this book has been distorted, then people would forever be misguided without another divine book or messenger to guide them. Therefore, they would be blameless in regards to their mistaken actions.

d. Such misguidance is contrary to the mercy and wisdom of God, therefore, the Qur'an needs to be protected from any kind of alteration or distortion.[308] Of course other similar formulations of approximately the same argument have also been put forward.[309]

CONCLUSION

Although some narrations seem to call into doubt the complete and untampered transmission of the Qur'an, by taking into consideration other narrations and wider historical evidence we may note that such claims are weak and contradictory at best. Without a doubt the Muslim community regards the Qur'anic text to be authentic and traceable back to the Prophet (s) and considering its history their view is not without justification.

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[308] Āmulī, 'Abd Allāh Jawādī, *Tafsīr-i Mawḍū'ī-yi Qur'ān-i Karīm*, Tehran: Isrā', 1373 AH (Solar)/1994, vol. 1, p. 315.

[309] See for example Nahwandi, *Nafaḥāt al-Raḥmān*, vol. 1, pp. 14-16; Ma'rifat, *Ṣiyānah al-Qur'ān*, p. 69.

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